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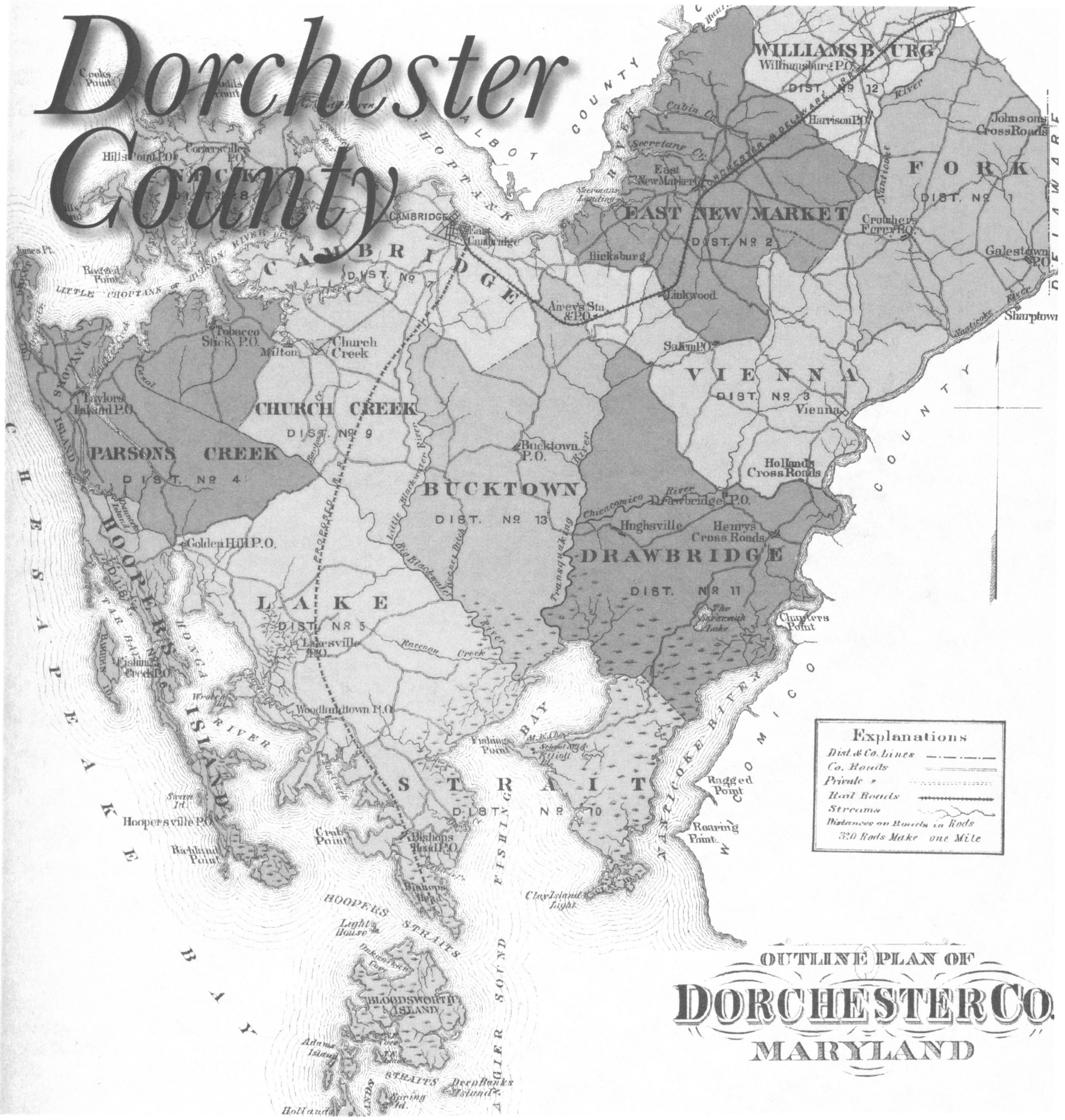
Shoreline

Vol. 20 • December 2013
For the Members of the Edward H. Nabb Research Center for Delmarva History and Culture at Salisbury University

Dorchester County


WILLIAMSBURG
Williamsburg P.O.
DIST. No 12
FORK
DIST. No 1
EAST NEW MARKET
DIST. No 2
CAMBRIDGE
DIST. No 7
CHURCH CREEK
DIST. No 9
PARSONS CREEK
DIST. No 4
VIENNA
DIST. No 3
BUCKTOWN
DIST. No 13
DRAWBRIDGE
DIST. No 11
LAKE
DIST. No 5
STRAIT
DIST. No 10
HOOPERS ISLAND
TALBOT COUNTY
CHOPTANK RIVER
LITTLE CHOPTANK
NANTICOKE RIVER
WICOMICO COUNTY
DELAWARE
CHESAPEAKE BAY
HONGA RIVER
FISHING BAY
HOOPERS STRAITS
TANGIER SOUND
BLOODSWORTH ISLAND
Cambridge
East Cambridge
East New Market P.O.
Harrison P.O.
Johnsons Cross Roads
Crotchers Ferry P.O.
Galestown P.O.
Sharptown
Hicksburg
Linkwood
Aireys Sta. & P.O.
Salem P.O.
Vienna
Hollands Cross Roads
Drawbridge P.O.
Hughsville
Henrys Cross Roads
Chapters Point
Bucktown P.O.
Church Creek
Milton
Tobacco Stick P.O.
Taylors Island P.O.
Golden Hill P.O.
Lakesville P.O.
Woodlandtown P.O.
Fishing Creek P.O.
Hoopersville P.O.
Richland Point
Crab Point
Bishops Head P.O.
Fishing Point
Ragged Point
Roaring Point
Clay Island Light
Light House
Cooks Point
Hills Point P.O.
Jones Pt.
Holland Island
Deep Banks Island
Adams Island
Explanations
Dist. & Co. Lines
Co. Roads
Private
Rail Roads
Streams
Distances on Roads in Rods
320 Rods Make one Mile
OUTLINE PLAN OF
DORCHESTER CO.
MARYLAND

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In a Word

By Dr. G. Ray Thompson

Our holiday issue of *Shoreline* is dedicated to Dorchester County themes. We have "mined" our archival resources to make this *Shoreline* a special edition for each of you to enjoy as you are slowing down from the holiday hustle-and-bustle. Articles, crafted by students, professional historians and residents of Dorchester County have something for everyone, from stories of folklore and folkways emerging from the marshes of Dorchester County, to historic architecture, social and family history, vintage geographic and ethnographic accounts, and Civil War accounts.

You have by this time noticed that we have sent out an annual appeal—our first—to provide support for enhancements to our programming, events, and archival needs. In the coming months you will also be hearing about the new academic commons which is soon to become a reality. Dean Hardy meets frequently with architects to finalize plans that will make the "plan" turn into a reality. She has also been able to obtain the hoped-for outreach and education coordinator postion for which we will soon begin advertising. This position will allow us to enhance our academic mission and tie us more closely to the community and region.

For those of you who haven't had a chance to see the exhibit "Native Americans on the Eastern Shore at First Contact: 1600-1700" please avail yourself of that treat. Also, by the beginning of the spring semester, you will see a new exhibit "Delmarvans go to War: The Civil War", an exciting exhibit which we have been working on since last summer. We hope you will enjoy it! The spring also brings our next fundraiser---at historic Lewes in Sussex County, DE – a location sure to be a favorite with everyone!

Those of us at the Nabb Center wish all of you the happiest of holidays and a wonderful New Year.

Submissions

The Nabb Research Center is always interested in articles on the history, culture or heritage of the Delmarva region. If you or anyone you know is interested in writing for *Shoreline*, please send material, proposals, suggestions or comments to the attention of the "Newsletter Editor" as follows:

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Salisbury University
1101 Camden Ave.
Salisbury, MD 21801-6860

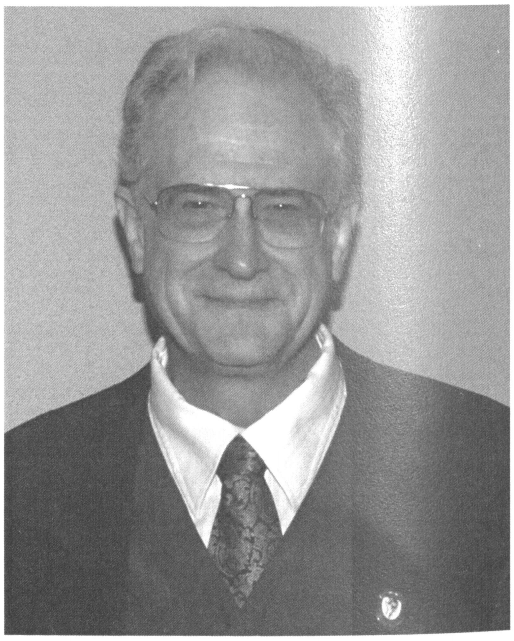
Or by e-mail to rcdhac@salisbury.edu. Please include the words "Newsletter Editor" in the subject line.

Hours & Closings

READING ROOM HOURS:
Monday: 10 a.m.-8 p.m.
Tuesday-Friday: 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

GALLERY HOURS:
Monday, Wednesday and Friday: 1-4 p.m.
or by appointment (please call 410-543-6312).

CLOSINGS:
The Nabb Research Center will be closed
December 23 – January 1 & January 20



Dr. G. Ray Thompson

Shoreline

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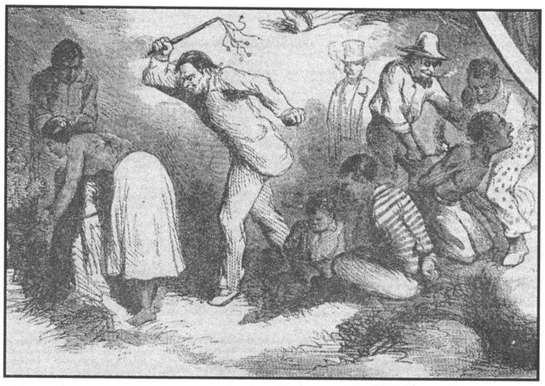

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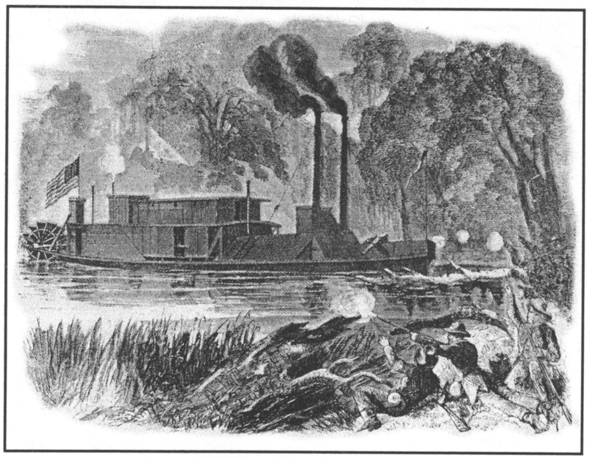

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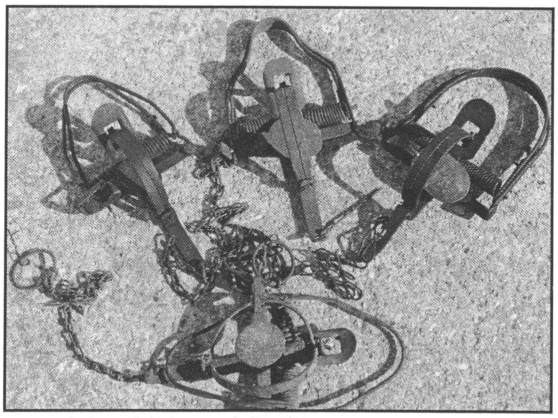
Civil Disobedience During the Civil War



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W.A. Gibbs and Son and the "Two-Trigger" Trap

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Director and Founder, Dr. G. Ray Thompson. *Research Assistant,* T. Aaron Horner. *Administrative Assistant,* Donna T. Messick. *Receptionists,* Pilar Burton and Leigh Anne Roye. *Access Archivist,* Leslie Van Veen. *Graduate Assistants,* Amanda Tuttle & Regina Miller.

This issue and back issues of *Shoreline* may be purchased for $15 each. Please contact us at 410-543-6312 or by e-mail at rcdhac@salisbury.edu for details.

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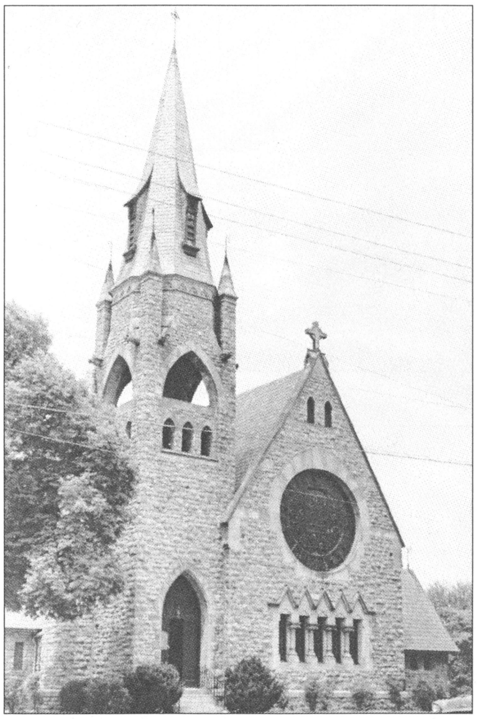
About the Front Cover:
"Outline Plan of Dorchester Co. Maryland": The 1877 Atlases and Other Early Maps of the Eastern Shore of Maryland.

A Peek into the Past

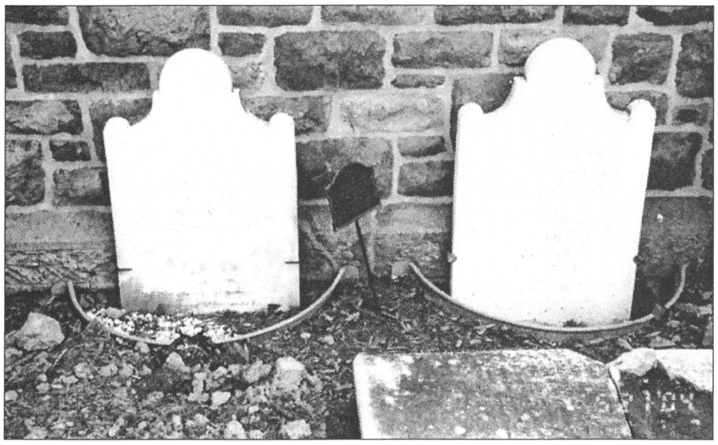
By Melanie Ayres Merryweather



Christ Episcopal Church photo credit: Library of Congress.

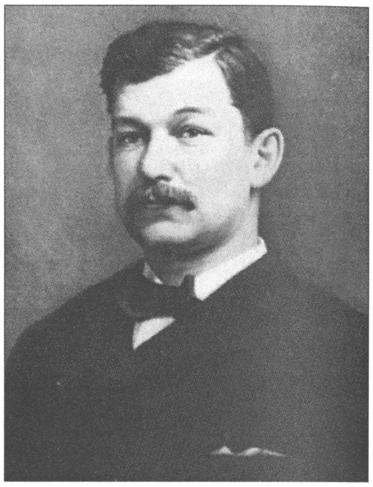
To get a lesson in Dorchester County's rich history, one only has to take a peek at the worn monuments hidden behind the brick wall, in the shadow of Christ Episcopal Church of Cambridge, located in the Great Choptank Parish. The past first sneaks up on you when you look at the cornerstone of the large granite church that has stood as a proud sentinel at the corner of Church and High streets since 1883. Christ Church was originally a frame building erected in 1693, just one year after Dorchester County had been subdivided into two parishes – the Great Choptank Parish and Dorchester Parish. That first church eventually fell into total disrepair, and in 1794 a new brick building was erected. The second church stood for about 90 years, until it was destroyed by fire on Thanksgiving Day in 1882. The present structure, with its Gothic architecture, was built in 1883 during the tenure of the Rev. Theodore Barber, one of the outstanding men to serve the Great Choptank Parish.

The churchyard has been a burial ground since the latter half of the 17th century. A few of those buried here might actually be under the foundation of the present church. There are also several persons who rest in unmarked graves, and they are undoubtedly among those in the oldest graves that probably were not marked with tablets or monuments of stone.



Robert and Sarah Goldsborough. Probably buried under the foundation. Courtesy of Melanie Merryweather.

The following relates some information about some of those who are buried here and what is found on some of their gravestones.



Portrait of Henry Lloyd by F.W. Wright. Maryland State Archives.

Robert Goldsborough (1733-1788) was educated in England. His ability made him a member of numerous provincial conventions during the turbulent period preceding the Revolutionary War. He was a delegate to the Continental Congress that drafted the Declaration of Independence, a framer of Maryland's first Constitution in 1776, and a Delegate to the Dorchester County Constitutional Ratification Convention in 1788. His grave and that of his wife Sarah Yerbury of England are two of those that are probably under the present church.

Resting among their ancestors and descendants, this historic resting place is the burial site for four Maryland governors: Charles Goldsborough, Henry Lloyd, Phillips Lee Goldsborough and Emerson C. Harrington. There is a monument here commemorating a fifth governor, John Henry, who was a member of this parish and whose grave at his home Weston on the Nanticoke River was washed away by erosion.

Governor Charles Goldsborough (1765-1834) was born at Hunting Creek and educated at the College of Pennsylvania, now the University of Pennsylvania. He was a member of the Maryland Senate, a member of the House of Delegates, a U. S. Representative and finally the governor of Maryland in 1819. He was the son of Charles and Anna Maria Tilghman Goldsborough. Governor Goldsborough first married Elizabeth Goldsborough, daughter of Judge Robert Goldsborough of Ashby in Talbot County, and second married Sarah Yerbury Goldsborough, daughter of Charles Goldsborough of Horns Point in Dorchester County.

Governor Henry Lloyd (1852-1920) was a member of the Maryland State Senate from 1882-1884, governor of Maryland from 1885-1888 and a Circuit Court judge from 1892-1908. He was the son of Daniel and Catherine Henry Lloyd. Governor Lloyd's paternal grandfather was governor Edward Lloyd and his maternal great-grandfather was governor John Henry. Governor Henry Lloyd's inscription reads: "The strife is o'er, the battle done. The victory of life is won. The song of triumph has begun. Requiescat in Pace."

Governor Phillips Lee Goldsborough (1865-1946) was state

Historic stones moved from Weston. Courtesy of Melanie Merryweather.

comptroller in 1897 and governor of Maryland from 1912-1916. He was a U.S. senator from 1929-1935. During Goldsborough's term of office, improvements in the school laws took place and the Workman's Compensation Commission was created. He was the son of Worthington and Henrietta Maria Jones Goldsborough.

Governor Emerson Columbus Harrington (1864-1945) was state comptroller in 1911, and governor of Maryland from 1916-1920. He organized the Council of Defense during World War I and the State Parole Board was adopted during his tenure. Governor Harrington was considered one of the outstanding trial lawyers of the State of Maryland. He was born at Madison, Dorchester County, the son of John E. and Annie Thompson Harrington.

Many colonial politicians are buried behind the brick walls, as well as Revolutionary War patriots and veterans from the Civil War, the War of 1812, the Mexican War, the Spanish American War, the Korean War, World Wars I and II and the Vietnam War.

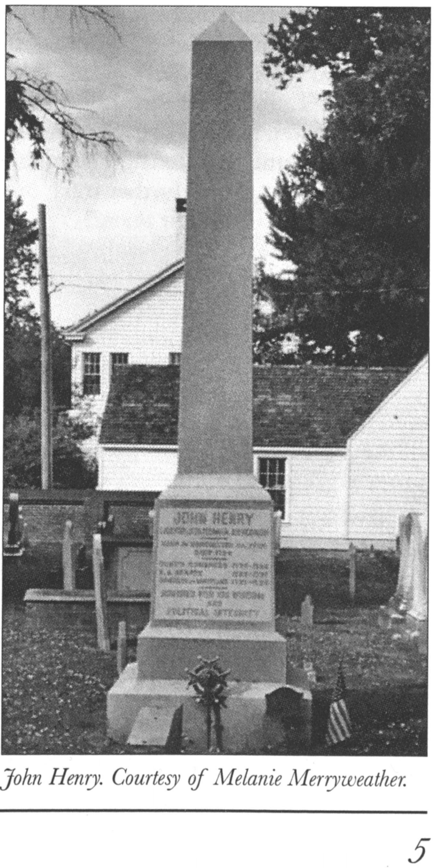
The earliest dated monuments in Dorchester County are those of William and Magdalen Stevens, which were moved to Christ Church in 1940 from the Huffington Farm, where the Cambridge Country Club is now located on the banks of the Choptank River. In 1997 the stones were removed from the churchyard, underwent restoration, and were placed inside the church for safekeeping. Magdalen Stevens died in 1678 and her husband William Stevens died in 1684. The Stevens family came to Maryland in 1651, first settling in what is now Calvert County before moving to Dorchester. William Stevens became one of the first justices of Dorchester County in 1669. The Stevens were ardent Quakers and good friends of George Fox, the founder of the Quaker religion. Many meetings of the Quakers were held at the Stevens home on the Choptank.

Other people who were born in the 1600s and are buried in the churchyard are Dr. William Murray (1692-1759) and his wives Sarah Ennalls Murray (1697-1742) and Elianor Warren Hollyday Murray, who died in 1750. Dr. Murray's stone reads: "To the memory of Doctor William Murray who departed this life on the 11th day of November Anno. Dom. 1759 in the 67th year of his age. This kind stone agreeable to his will, is by his executor in all humble manner laid." His first wife Sarah died in 1742 and her monument reads: "Here lyeth the body of Sarah, wife of Dr. William Murray, who departed this life November 19, 1742, age 45. Mother of ten children and here likewise lies the bodies of three of her children William Vans Murray, John Murray and Sarah Murray." Dr. Murray's second wife Elianor's tombstone reads: "Here lyeth the body of Elianor the wife of Dr. William Murray, who departed this life the 18th of Sept. 1750 in the 50th year of her life. Eldest daughter of Mr. Clement Hill of Prince George County and granddaughter of Henry Darnal of same County. Remarkable for piety, and being a good stepmother."

Another early monument of someone else born in the 1600s is that of Col. Henry Ennalls, who died in 1734. His stone was moved to Christ Church by Dr. Guy Steele in 1919 from Eldon, the former homestead of the Ennalls family. It reads: "Here lyeth the body of Col. Henry Ennalls and Mary his wife. He was for several years Judge of the Dorchester County Court and departed this life the 4th day of March 1734 in the 59 year of his age, and she departed this life the 13th day of July, 1743, in the 72d year of her age and was the mother of nine children."

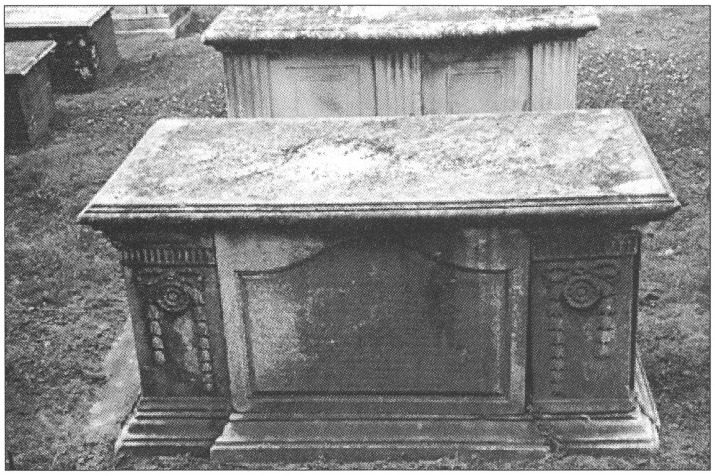
Other early stones Dr. Steele had moved from Weston are those of Major James Billings, a native of Whitehaven, England who died on September 14, 1747 at Vienna, MD, and his wife Ann Billings, daughter of the Hon. Col. John Rider, Esq., who died on February 17, 1756, aged 43 years at Vienna. Also, the marker for Henry Steele (1718-1782) was moved from Weston. Henry Steele came from England in 1749 and settled near Vienna, where he became a large and prosperous property owner. He was a justice in 1759, a burgess from 1763-1770 and a member of the General Assembly in 1777.

In the same area of the churchyard as the Billings family stones is the memorial monument to governor John Henry. This stone was erected in his memory by his descendants. John Henry was a lawyer, statesman and governor. He was born in 1750 and died in 1798. John Henry was a member of the Continental Congress from 1777-1788, a member of the U.S. Senate from 1789-1797 and governor of Maryland from 1797-1798. His monument says that he is "Honored for His Wisdom and Political Integrity."



John Henry. Courtesy of Melanie Merryweather.

Major Thomas Nevett died in 1748 and his stone reads: "There is a gloomy vale between us. Pass through I'm gone before." He held many important offices under the Colonial government and was a justice from 1732-1748 and judge of the Provincial Court in 1742. His son John Ryder Nevett, Esq. died



Williamina Smith Goldsborough. Courtesy of Melanie Merryweather.

in 1772. "Beneath this tomb are deposited the remains of John Rider Nevett, Esq. who in the 25th year of his life, endeared by felicity and adorned by the exercise of every virtue, was on April 13, 1772, unfortunately drowned in the river Choptank. His wife was Sarah Maynadier, daughter of Rev. Daniel Maynadier, a minister of the Church of England and for many years rector of this parish. The relics of his only son, an infant, are likewise here interred."

Williamina Elizabeth Smith Goldsborough (1762-1790) was the wife of Charles Goldsborough of Horns Point and daughter of the Reverend William Smith, first provost of the University of Pennsylvania and first president of Washington College. She died in 1790 and her parents, the Reverend and Mrs. William Smith, came to Christ Church and placed her monument, which has the following inscription: "To the memory of Williamina Elizabeth Goldsborough Her mournful parents inscribed this tablet. Called from this mortal scene in the Bloom of life...Here lies a much loved Daughter, Mother, Wife...To whom each Grace and Excellence were given...A saint on Earth, an angel now in Heaven...to her sad shrine with trembling steps and slow...bereaved parents come to speak their woes...to grave it deep in monumental stone... and with a husband's sorrow mix their own...But ah! no further trace this tablet bears...Line after Line is blotted with their tears."

Christ Church is especially proud of our Revolutionary War patriots. Richard Pattison (1761-1825) was born on Taylors Island. He was a justice of Dorchester County from 1794-1818 and a member of the General Assembly of Maryland from 1796-1799. His inscription says simply: "In memory of Richard Pattison who departed this life November 10, 1825 aged 61 years A Soldier of the Revolution."

Another patriot, Captain John Brohawn (1761-1820,) was also from Taylors Island. His stone reads: "In Memory of John Brohawn of the Revolutionary War who was born April 1761 and departed this life November 10, 1820 Respected by his neighbors. A good citizen and honest man. Give Joy or Grief. Give Ease of Pain. Take life or friends away."

Lt. John Stewart McNamara (1755-1823) was a Revolutionary War veteran who lived in the Lake District of Dorchester County. His interesting inscription reads "All of you that pass by pray think on me. Think that I was once in the world like thee but now lie mouldering in the dust in hope to rise among the just."

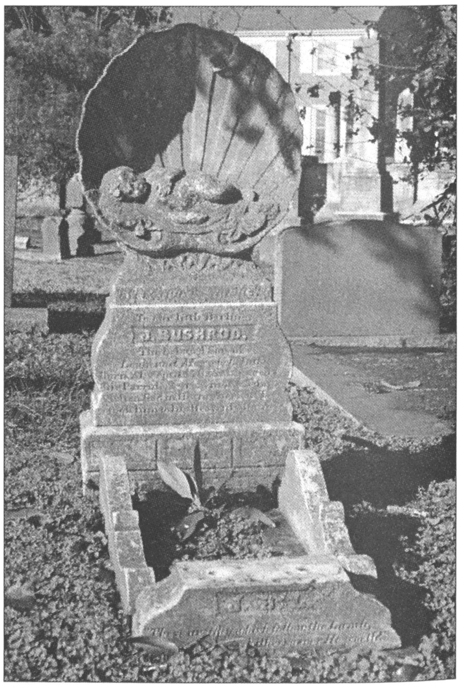
Major Francis Turpin (1759-1829) lived and died at his home Rehoboth on the Nanticoke River near Eldorado. This soldier's inscription reads: "Stop passenger as you pass by, As you are now, so once was I...I had my share of earthly care...As I was living as you are, But God from all has set me free...Prepare for death and follow me."

Nathan Griffin (1759-1837), another Revolutionary War veteran, was from Town Point. His monument reads: "At an early age, he joined the Revolutionary Army and nobly went forward in defense of his country's invaded rights. He lived to enjoy the blessing of that Independence for which on several occasions he so gallantly fought. In private life, the integrity of his principles commanded the respect and esteem of all who knew him. He was a kind and affectionate husband, a tender and indulgent parent, and a firm and uncompromising friend. Reader, he was truly an honest man." The graves of the Revolutionary soldiers were brought to Christ Church from various locations in the county through the efforts of Dr. Guy Steele.

The Hon. Josiah Bayly (1769-1846) is also buried at Christ Church. He was a member of the House of Delegates, Dorchester County, 1803-04, district attorney, 4th Judicial District, 1818 and Attorney General of Maryland, 1831-46. His law office (circa 1800) adjacent to the Churchyard, is the earliest surviving law office in the county and sits on land originally acquired from Christ Church. It is said that at one time he was the lawyer for Patty Cannon who was charged with stealing and selling slaves and with several murders. He also represented the Baltimorean Betsy Patterson in her divorce case with Jerome Bonaparte.

A curiosity in the graveyard is the stone of Ann Weller, who died in 1817. She was the wife of the Reverend George Weller, a rector of this parish, and a native of Bedford, NY. In the 188 years since her burial a tree has devoured her tombstone, and only a small corner of the stone is visible now. The Graveyard Committee placed a marker at the foot of the tree a few years ago in her memory.

The tombstone for Bushrod Lake, III who lived from 1876-1878 is called a "cradle monument" because of its shape. An especially moving verse is on that monument: "To Our Little Darling J. Bushrod the beloved son of Levin and Maggie E. Lake born 21 Sept. 1876 and departed his parents 2 yrs. 2 mos & 5 days When God in His mysterious love took



Cradle monument for J. Bushrod Lake. Courtesy of Melanie Merryweather him to his Heavenly Home."

Major Henry Anson Barber, U.S. Army, was born in Cambridge on August 20, 1859, and died in Cambridge on December 31, 1915. One of the heroes of the Spanish-American War, Major Hal Barber was the son of the Reverend Theodore P. and Anna Hooper Barber of Cambridge. Hal joined the U.S. Army in Baltimore on March 5, 1885, for the purpose of obtaining a commission. He served in the 1st, 7th and 9th Cavalries. On July 1, 1898, Lt. Hal Barber, while in the 9th Cavalry, was the "first man up San Juan Hill." A curiosity about his monument is that the footstone faces the reader while the monument faces away from the reader. A tree planted in front of that monument now obscures all the writing on the tombstone. I had the branches thinned out so I could see what was written on the monument, and it tells us he was "A Brave and Faithful Soldier."

Another interesting monument in the graveyard is that of Charles Goldsborough, son of Robert Goldsborough of Ashby, who lived from 1707-1767. Charles was born at Ashby and lived in Talbot County during his youth. As an adult he moved to Dorchester County and, in 1734, bought the property known as "The Point" where he lived for the rest of his life. In August 1728 Charles Goldsborough was admitted to the bar in Talbot County, and he practiced law in different parts of the colony with distinguished ability. In 1728 he also was appointed Clerk of Court of Dorchester County. On December 15, 1761, he took his oath as Commissary General and from 1752 to 1762 he represented Dorset in the Lower House of Assembly. In 1762 he was removed to the Upper House by his appointment as member of the Lord Proprietor's Council.

The inscription on his monument is entirely in Latin and the translation reads: "Here are stored the bones of Charles Goldsborough, armiger, son of Robert and Elizabeth Goldsborough, who after the tiresomeness of this life, the watches and the labors very severe, at length breathed out life, 14th day of July, in the year of Christ 1767, in his 60th year."

There are many more persons buried here in the shadow of Christ Church who have served our county, state and country loyally in various capacities over the 300-year period that the churchyard has existed. It is for all of them that we, who are interested in the preservation of this historic resting place, are laboring to see that Christ Church Churchyard is preserved for future generations.

Melanie Merryweather conducted an exacting review of the church's graveyard records and gravestones for the church over 25 years ago. This article elaborates on some of her research. For more information see christchurchcambridge.org.

Cambridge, 1845

The following article, written by correspondent Bob Random under the heading "Gleanings from the Country," is from the June 13, 1845, edition of *The Baltimore Sun* and was submitted to us by Jefferson Boyer.

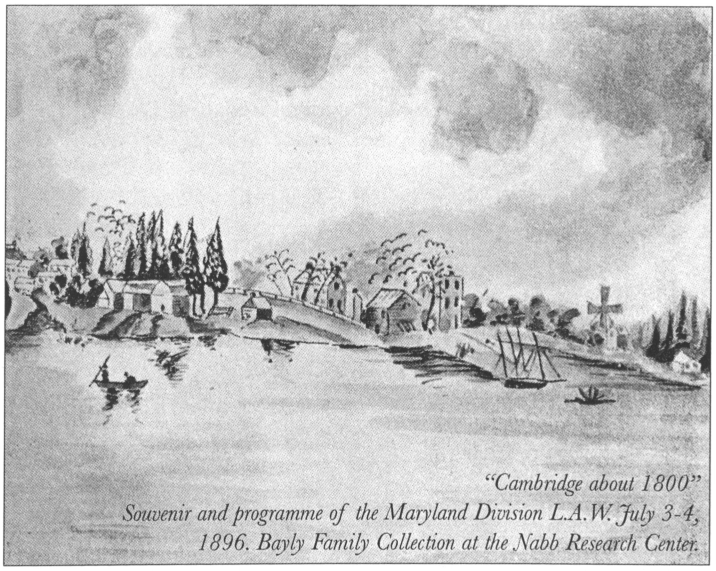
On the great Choptank river and about sixteen miles from its mouth, stands the beautiful village of Cambridge, beautiful in all that constitutes the true charms of village scenery; the stately elms and poplars throw their umbrageous shadows over the neatly painted wooden houses, while flowers of varied hue and odour greet the eye and spread their grateful perfume on every side; everything denotes thrift, care, intelligence and refinement. Nor should I suppose that these appearances are confined to "the upper ten thousand," as is the case in many other villages I have visited in Maryland.

You and our city readers are bound to congratulate me upon my escape from the glare of hot bricks and city bustle, to this delightful retreat, and if there be any taste among you for the beautiful, the sweet and the refreshing, you will not fail to pay Cambridge a summer visit. Here may be found, in three well conducted and amply provided inns, all that the most fastidious could desire in the way of comforts for the inner man; among them a temperance hotel, under the management of a true Maryland gentleman, W. H. Yates, Esq.

In the town, and adjoining the Episcopal Church, is a well enclosed and almost beautiful burial ground—I say almost beautiful burial ground—for if a similar row of trees did but skirt the eastern and southern borders, that lend their sombre shades to the other sides, a more beautiful spot could not be found for the repose of the dead—of course it would gain in sublimity, seclusion and romance by being farther from the town. Here rest the remains of that favorite son of Maryland, the late lamented Henry Page.

The chief topic of conversation here is the probabilities of Texan annexation and war with England. All parties look eagerly to the "Sun" and the brilliant "Rays" for light upon this, as upon other important matters. I see all the Baltimore papers here, but the "Sun" and "Ray" are the favorites—why? Because this is the age of light and enterprise—men are seeking light—they must have it—and those whose enterprise enable them to spread light, will not fail to find encouragement and reward. More anon.

Yours, in Haste,
Bob Random

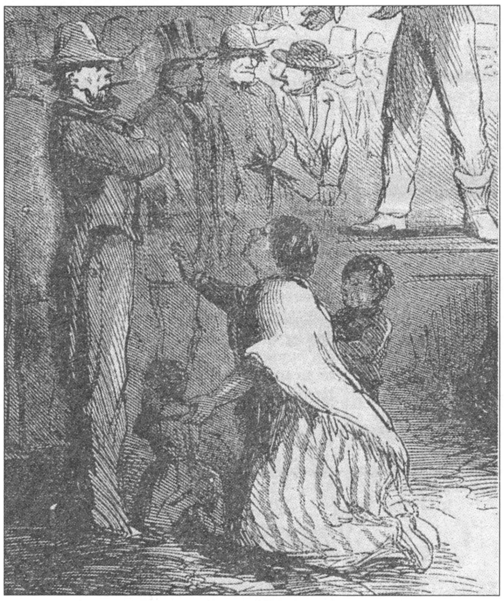


"Cambridge about 1800"
Souvenir and programme of the Maryland Division L.A.W. July 3-4, 1896. Bayly Family Collection at the Nabb Research Center.

Lydia's Story (1804): A Dorchester House Servant Sold to the Negro Buyers and Transported to South Carolina

The following article, contributed by Jefferson Boyer, was excerpted from the 1836 book Slavery in the United States. A Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Charles Ball, A Black Man, Who Lived 40 Years in Maryland, South Carolina and Georgia, as a Slave Under Various Masters, and Was One Year in the Navy with Commodore Barney During the Late War. *The complete book is available on openlibrary.org and archive.org.*

The narrative of Charles Ball's life became quite well known during the Abolitionist Movement, and it was updated many times since it was first published in 1836. Ball's grandfather was a slave imported from Africa to Calvert County, Maryland in 1730. Ball's birth is estimated to be about 1780, and his memoirs state that he was a slave for 50 years. Charles Ball lived on the Western Shore with the Symmes family, but was sold to a slave dealer in the Carolinas. His book is believed to have been ghost written by Isaac Fisher.



Harper's Weekly January 24, 1863

This account of Lydia and mention of other slaves from the lower Eastern Shore are found within Ball's narrative. It begins when Charles Ball, weeding the cotton plants in the field, notices a woman who does not put her infant child in the shade at the edge of the field, but carries her in a knapsack as she "performed her task at the hoe."

I pitied this woman; as we were going home at night, I came near her, and spoke to her. Perceiving as soon as she spoke, that she had not been brought up amongst the slaves of this plantation—for her language was different from theirs—I asked her why she did not do as the other women did, and leave her child at the end of the row in the shade. "Indeed," said she, "I cannot leave my child in the weeds amongst the snakes. What would be my feelings if I should leave it there and a scorpion were to bite it? Besides, my child cries so piteously, when I leave it alone in the field, that I cannot bear to hear it. Poor thing, I wish we were both in the grave, where all sorrow is forgotten.

I asked this woman, who did not appear to be more than twenty years old, how long she had been here, and where she came from. "I have been here," said she, "almost two years and came from the Eastern Shore. I once lived as well as any lady in Maryland. I was born a slave to a gentleman whose name was Le Compt.

My master was a man of property; lived on his estate, and entertained much company. My mistress, who was very kind to me, made me her nurse, when I was about ten years old, and put me to live with her own children. I grew up amongst her daughters; not as their equal and companion, but as a favored and indulged servant. I was always well dressed, and received a portion of all the delicacies of their table. I wanted nothing, and had not the trouble of providing even for myself. I believe there was not a happier being in the world than I was. At present, none can be more wretched.

When I was yet a child, my master had given me to his oldest daughter, who was about one year older than I was. To her, I had always looked as my future mistress; and expected, that whenever she became a wife, I should follow her person, and cease to be a member of the family of her father. When I was almost seventeen, my young mistress married a gentleman of the Eastern Shore of Virginia, who had been addressing her more than a year.

Soon after the wedding was over, my new master removed his wife to his own residence; and took me and a black boy of my own age, that the lady's father had given her, with him. He had caused it to be reported in Maryland that he was very wealthy, and was the owner of a plantation, with a large stock of slaves and other property. It was supposed at the time of the marriage, that my young mistress was making a very good match, and all her friends were pleased with it. When her lover came to visit her, he always rode in a handsome gig, accompanied by a black man on horseback, as his servant.

This man told us in the kitchen, that his master was one of the most fashionable men in Virginia, was a man of large fortune, and that all the young ladies in the county he lived in, had their eyes upon him.

These stories I repeated carefully to my young mistress; and added every persuasion that I could think of, to induce her to accept her lover as her husband. My feelings had become deeply interested in the issue of this matter; for whilst the master was striving to win the heart of my young mistress, the servant had already conquered mine.

It was more than a hundred miles from the residence of my old master, to that of my young one; and when we arrived at the latter place, my mistress and I soon found, that we had been equally credulous, and were equally deceived. We were taken to an old dilapidated mansion, which was quite in keeping with everything on the estate to which it was attached. The house was almost without furniture; and there were no servants in it, except myself and my companion. The black man who had so effectually practiced upon me, belonged to one of my new master's companions—and had a wife and three children in the neighborhood.

My mistress soon discovered that her husband's companions were gamblers and horse-racers, who frequently convened at her house, to concert or mature some scheme, the object of which was to cheat someone.

My old master was a member of the church, and was very scrupulous in the observance of his moral duties. His precepts had been deeply implanted in the mind of my young mistress; and the society of these sportsmen, (as the friends of my young master denominated themselves,) became so revolting to her feelings, that after she had been married nearly a year, and had exhausted all her patience and her fortitude, in endeavoring to reclaim her husband from the vile associations and pursuits, by which his time and his affections were engaged, she determined at last, to return to her father for a time, and to take me with her, for the purpose of ascertaining whether this would not bring him to reflect upon the wrong he had done her, as well as himself.

She communicated to me her designs, and we were waiting for an opportunity of carrying them into effect, when one evening, near sun-down, my master came to me in the kitchen, and told me he wished me to go to the house of a gentleman, who lived about a mile distant, and deliver a letter for him, without letting my mistress know anything of the matter. I immediately set out, expecting to return in half an hour. As I left the house I saw my mistress in the garden; and I never saw her again.

Between the house of my master, and that to which he had sent me, was a grove of young pine trees, that had grown up in a field, that had formerly been cultivated, but which had been neglected, on account of its poverty, for many years. Through this thicket, the path which I had to travel, led; and when near the middle of the wood, I saw a white man step into the path, only a few yards before me, with a rope in his hand. Sometime before this, my mistress had told me, that she wished to get me back to her father's house in Maryland, because she was afraid that my master would sell me to the negro buyers; and the moment I saw the man with the rope in my path, the words of my mistress were recollected. I screamed, and turned to fly towards home, but at the first step, was met by the colored man, who had attended my master as his servant, when he visited Maryland at the time he was courting my mistress—and who had made so deep an impression on my heart. This was the first time I had seen him, since I came to live in Virginia, and base as I knew he must be, from his former conduct to me, yet at the sight of him, my former affection for a moment revived, and I rushed into his arms, which were extended towards me, hoping that he would save me from the danger I so much dreaded from behind. He saw that I was frightened, and had fled to him for protection, and only said, 'come with me.' I followed him, more by instinct than by reason, and holding to his arm, ran as fast as I could-- I knew not wither. I did not observe whether we were on the path or not. I do not know how far we had run, when he stopped, and said—we must remain here for some time.

In a few minutes, the white man whom I had seen in the path, came up with us, and seizing me by the hands, he and my pretended protector bound them together at my back, and to suppress my cries, tied a large handkerchief round my head, and over my mouth. It was now becoming dark, and they hurried out of the wood, and across the fields, to a small creek, the water of which fell into the Chesapeake Bay. Here was a boat, and another white man in it. They forced me on board; and the white man taking the oars, whilst the black managed the rudder, we were quickly out in the bay, and in less than an hour, I was on board a small schooner, lying at anchor, where I found eleven others, who like myself, had been dragged from their homes and their friends, to be sold to the southern traders.

I have no doubt, that my master had sold me without the knowledge of my mistress, and that he endeavored to persuade her that I had run away, perhaps he was successful in this endeavor. I heard no more of my mistress, for whom I was very sorry, for I knew she would be greatly distressed at losing me.

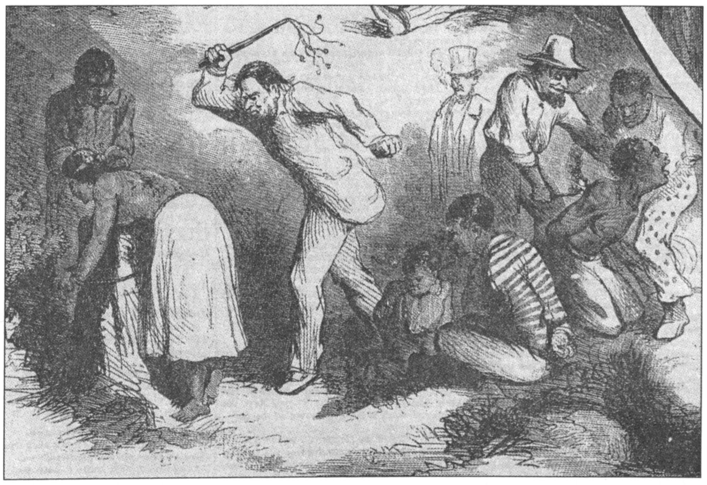
The vessel remained at anchor where we found her that night, and the next day until evening, when she made sail, and beat up the bay all night against a head wind. When she approached the western shore, she hoisted a red handkerchief at her mast head, and a boat came off from the land, large enough to carry us all, and we were removed to a house on the bank of York river, where I found about thirty men and women, all imprisoned in the cellar of a small tavern. The men were in irons, but the women were not bound with anything. The cords and handkerchief had been taken from me whilst on board the vessel. We remained at York River more than a week; and whilst there, twenty-five or thirty persons were brought in and shut up with us . . .

Shortly after this, Ball and Lydia were late for roll call back at the plantation. Lydia was stripped to the back and whipped for being late; Charles Ball was told that since it was his first day, he was being spared the lashing. At Christmastime, Lydia's child died (and was buried with a packet of meal, a little bow and two arrows and a miniature canoe, according to the customs of her husband who was transported here from Africa). Ball writes, "Lydia told me she rejoiced that her child was dead, and out of a world in which slavery and wretchedness must have been its only portion." Lydia then became weak and could not finish picking cotton. She died three months later of consumption.

Also related in the book is Ball's encounter with a runaway slave (after he, himself, had run away). He found the runaway slave, who was initially from Kent County, Delaware, camping out in the woods. He had been trained as a house servant, and, according to his master's will, he was to be freed at age 25. Instead he was sold by the executor of his master's will, taken to Baltimore and then sold to slave owners in the Carolinas.

Ball's final account regarding the Shore was of a boat, laden with corn, coming from the Nanticoke River during the War of 1812. It seemed to have eluded the British fleet, but it was captured and brought back. The whole boat was burnt up to make a point.

Harper's Weekly January 24, 1863



Dorchester County: An 1807 Geographical Description

The excerpts below, contributed by Jefferson Boyer, are from the 1807 book A Geographical Description of the States of Maryland and Delaware *by Joseph Scott. The book may be found online at the Maryland State Archive's website: msa.maryland.gov. The original spelling has been kept.*

DORCHESTER

This is the largest county on the Eastern Shore, except Worcester. It was established before the year 1671, and is 32 miles long, and 27 broad, containing 374,579 acres. It is bounded N. by Caroline county, and Choptank river, which separates it from Talbot county, S. E. by Nanticoke river, which divides it from Somerset county, and S. and W. by the Chesapeak bay. It contained, in 1790, 10,538 free persons, and 5,337 slaves; and, in 1800, 11,778 free persons, and 4,566 slaves. The lands in the S. parts of the county, are low, and marshy; particularly along Transquaking, Blackwater, and Teram creeks, and along Hungary river, which is an arm of the Chesapeak bay, that separates Hooper's Island, from the main land. The principal produce is corn,wheat and lumber. The rivers abound with fish, and fowl, as those in the other counties of the Eastern shore.

CAMBRIDGE, a post town, and the seat of justice for the county, containing about 50 houses and 300 inhabitants. It is situated on the S. side of Choptank river, about 15 miles from its mouth. The situation is healthy and agreeable. The public buildings are a church, court house, and jail. It is 37 miles S. of Easton, 152 S. S. W. of Philadelphia, and 100 from Washington city. Lat. 38. 34. N. long. 0. 59. W. of Philadelphia, and 76. 12. W. of Greenwich.

VIENNA, a small post town, agreeably situated on the W. side of Nanticoke river, upon a plain, elevated about 12 or 13 feet above the surface of the river. It contains 13 dwellings, principally, in a state of decay, four respectable stores, several granaries, two taverns, a collectors office, and an impaired brick Episcopal church, in which divine service is sometimes celebrated. Two wharves extend into the river, at which vessels of any burthen may load. The town commands very little trade, although advantageously situated for both foreign and domestic. Its decline has originated, in the absence of enterprising, and active inhabitants, the obstruction in navigating the river to its extremities, the commercial importance of Baltimore, and above all the prevailing opinion that the situation of the town is unhealthy; but the character of unhealthiness it no longer deserves; for the excluding by ditches, the tide, which supported a morass on the S. bodies of stagnant water, which lay in the bosom of the town, have been removed, by which the situation has become more healthy. Vienna is 120 miles from Washington city.

NEW MARKET, a small post town, nine miles, N.E. of Cambridge.

MIDDLETOWN, a small village about seven miles westerly of Vienna, and two E. of the head of Transquaking creek.

FEDERALSBURG, a small village, on marshy Hope creek, partly in Dorchester, and partly in Caroline counties. It is 25 miles N.E. by E. of Cambridge, and 20 S. by E. of Denton.

HUNTING CREEK TOWN, a village in the N. parts of the county, 18 miles N. E. of Cambridge, and 16 S. by W. of Denton.

INDIAN TOWN, a small village situated on Indian Creek, a short stream which falls into Choptank river. It is three miles S. W. of Newmarket.

ISLANDS

GOLDSOROUGH ISLAND is on the E. side of the Chesapeak, on the coast of Dorchester county, opposite the mouth of Hungary river. It contains about 2,200 acres.

JAMES ISLAND, is situated at the mouth of Hudson river, on the coast of Dorchester county. It contains 1,670 acres.

HOOPER'S ISLAND, is situated on the coast of Dorchester county, on the east side of the Bay. It is separated from the main land by Hungary river, and contains about 7,300 acres.

BARREN ISLAND is situated on the east side of the Chesapeak bay, in Dorchester county. It is small, and lies opposite the mouth of Patuxent river, on the Western Shore. On the S. E.it is separated, from Hooper's island, and the main land, by a narrow channel.

SHARP'S ISLAND contains about 2,200 acres. It is situated on the east side of the bay, in Dorchester county.

RIVERS

NANTICOKE is one of the most considerable rivers on the Eastern Shore, about 45 miles in length. It rises in Sussex county, in the State of Delaware, flows S. W. and empties into the Chesapeak bay, on the S. side of Philip's Point. It received its name from a tribe of Indians, called the Nanticokes, who resided on its banks. They emigrated to the State of New York, and live between Owegy, and a branch of the Susquehanna. It is estimated that they can muster about 80 warriors.

CHOPTANK [is] a considerable river. It rises in Kent county, in the State of Delaware, and pursuing a S. W. course, about 43 miles, turns suddenly to the W. N. W. and enters the Chesapeak, between Cook's Point, and Tilghman's Island.

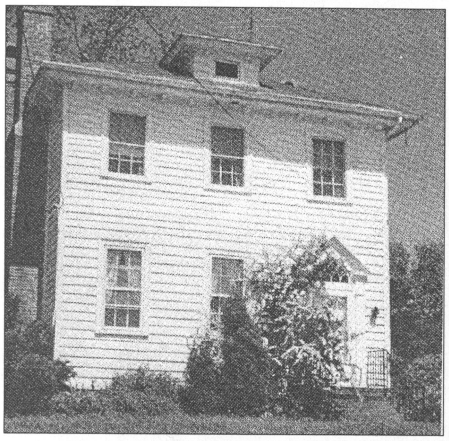
[*Editor's note: modern readers may question this, but it is accurate – there was no bridge across the Choptank at Cambridge at the time. –jpb]

Bob Random on the Eastern Shore: Vienna, 1845

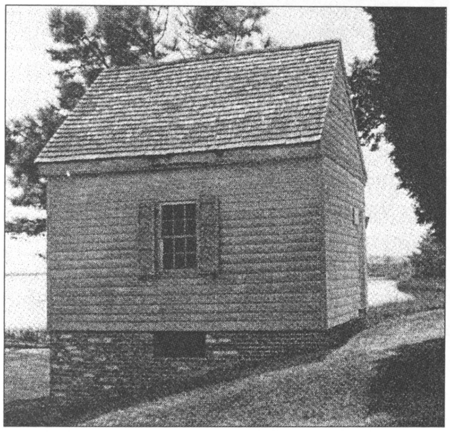
The following article from the June 20, 1845, edition of The Baltimore Sun *was written by correspondent Bob Random and found under the heading "Gleanings from the Country." It was submitted to us by Jefferson Boyer.*

Vienna, Md., June 16.

The Ferry—Marsh Lands—Hotel—Charges—Old Church, &c.



The Tavern House, late 18th century. Photo courtesy of Maryland Historical Trust.



Customs House, late 18th century. Photo courtesy of Maryland Historical Trust.

On the road from Cambridge to the next county town, Princess Ann, and immediately on the shore of the Nanticoke, in Dorchester county, is the village of Vienna. There is nothing whatever, prepossessing in the appearance of this village, although it has been designated as the Capital of the new State, to be made by the annexation of the Eastern Shore of Maryland to Delaware, as I was informed by one of the friends of the scheme of this annexation. Across the river there has been a bridge leading over into Somerset county, but now in a ruinous state. I learned that it is about being repaired, but if the same materials are to be used now constituting this fragment of a bridge, I should not like to be the first to venture on it. In the meantime the traveler finds his way across by means of a ferry, and pitiable is his case if he be found on the Somerset shore seeking his transit, under the influence of the sun's intense heat, or the fall of such a storm as there overtook your friend Bob. Old Charon himself, never delayed more cautiously in transporting the doubtful ghost over the dreaded Styx, than do the three "gemmen of color" who are appointed to perform this small service for the way-faring man; and never was he more punctilious in exacting the legal fee, which, by the way, is exorbitant. A gentleman cannot pass from one county to the other and back for less than forty cents on horse, and double for a gig. The citizens of either county, however, pass and re-pass free of charge, the passage being kept up by a joint appropriation, and strangers being taxed to reimburse the county.

On each side of the river, stretching along its shores as far as the eye can reach, are extensive tracts of marsh, as level as the surface of the river, and but little elevated above it, and clothed with a sea of green. The only use made of these savannas is for grazing, though could they be brought into cultivation, there would be, I should suppose, no better lands in the State. An effort was made many years since to drain a portion of these marshes, by dams to shut out the river, and a portion sown in rice succeeded very well; the only difficulty experienced was from the operations of the muskrats, which, abounding here, burrowed through the dams and destroyed them. If the dams were solidly and firmly built of stone, I apprehend this difficulty might be obviated; at least it is worth the experiment.

At Vienna there is but one hotel, and he who keeps it knows it. If the charge over the ferry was immoderate, no less so was the demands of mine host—one dollar and fifty cents only for two meals for man and beast! This I account for by supposing that the miasma from the marshy shores of the Nanticoke not only swells the doctor's bill, but reminding the inhabitants of an early exit off this mortal coil, stimulates them to extraordinary exertions to lay up a little store for their little ones.

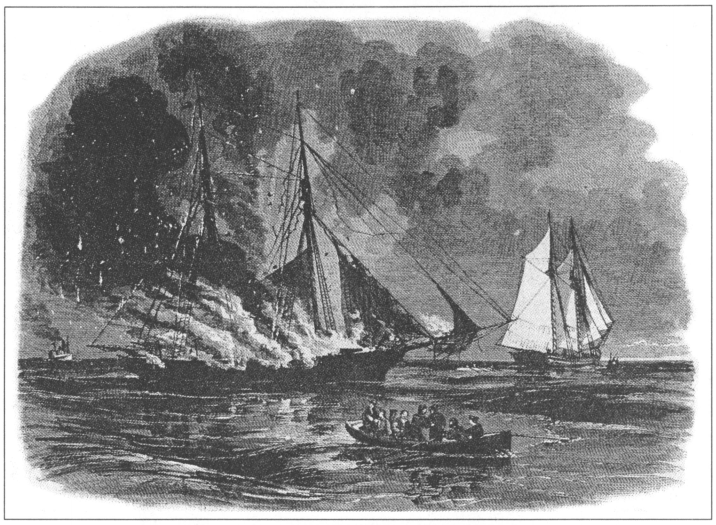
Near the village are the ruins of an old Protestant Episcopal church. I endeavored to ascertain its name, but was not able. It is in a remote corner of a wheat field, and without even a path to lead to it. The building is about sixty feet long and above twenty wide, and is embosomed in a beautiful grove of oaks. About a third of the wall has fallen out, leaving the two ends still standing. From appearance it had been used by cattle as a place of rest, though an exceedingly dangerous one, doubtless. It could not be otherwise than that a sigh of regret should escape me when looking at the work of the pious hearts and laborious hands of the early occupants of this land, now tumbling to ruinous decay over the forgotten relics of those who reared it. Even its name is unknown. The grave yard is overrun with ranks of [weeds and] wild briars, and the tomb stones are all in fragments scattered over the yard. I spied two fresh graves and one new monument that would seem to indicate that somebody living still had some interest there. If so, why not rebuild this venerable church? There is enough bricks remaining in the standing walls for this purpose, and would build a house sufficiently large for the wants of the surrounding country. At Quantico, a church has lately been erected by the exertions of the Rev. Mr. Lewen, and we commend to his pious zeal the Yucatanic ruins at Vienna.

There is some trade at Vienna, and if its denizens would increase it, I would recommend a reduction in the ferriage—(Wicomico ferry is only twelve cents)—a reduction also in tavern charges—a draining and embankment of their marshes, for their stomach's sake—a more cheerful countenance at all times—an occasional trip to Salisbury to catch a little of the city-like business spirit of that place—and above all, to rebuild that old church upon the same sacred and beautiful spot.

Your friend, and the friend of the Viennese.
Bob Random

Civil Disobedience During the Civil War: Running the Chesapeake Blockade

By Dan Norris



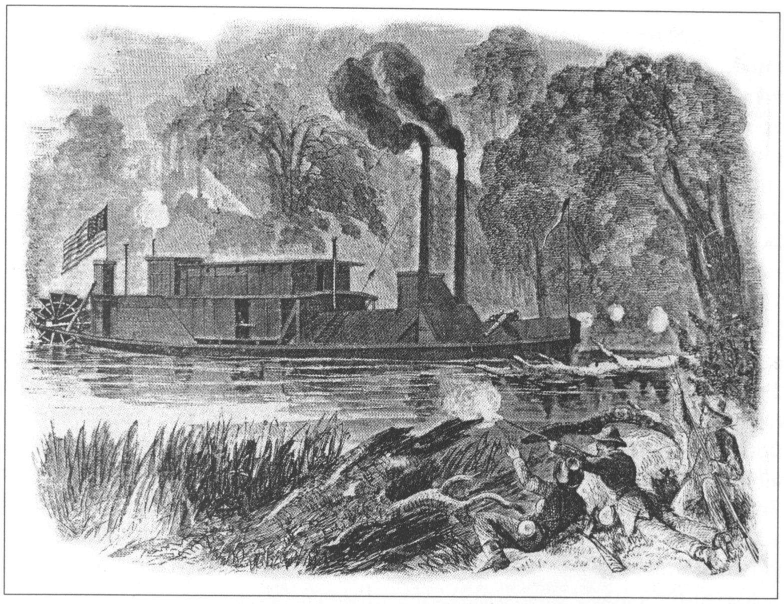
The Revenue Cutter Caleb Cushing *blown up by pirates.*
Harpers Weekly, January 11, 1863.

Henry Holliday, heir of the Readbourne estate that graced the Chester River in Queen Anne's County, was headed south with his cousin. As with others on Maryland's Eastern Shore, their sympathies were secessionist, and they followed their hearts south to join the Confederacy. Their 33-foot log canoe, under the command of Captain Turpin, slid around the southern end of Smith Island in the dark, and her sails filled as the narrow craft heeled over for the run to the mouth of the Potomac River. With land looming in the dark, a Federal barge challenged them: "Heave to, or we'll fire." The sailing canoe slowed in the lee of the nearby shore, but made just enough headway to escape the barge's howitzer rounds with only a holed sail, and continued on to Virginia's Tidewater coast just east of Heathsville. After a wagon ride to Richmond and three years of service in the Confederate army, Henry returned to the Shore, "a wreck of himself by reason of exposure … in active service," while his cousin returned home after he was "maimed for life in the battle of Gettysburg."

Blockade runners on the Chesapeake Bay were often local watermen who plied their trade in log canoes, designed for tonging oysters, or similar craft that they constructed locally to eke out a hardscrabble existence. Because their livelihood on the bay was endangered by the upheaval of the Civil War, many used their knowledge of the Chesapeake Bay's shallow waters and estuaries to avoid the blockade of the Federal Potomac Flotilla and deliver supplies, war materiel and persons to the western shore of Virginia. In 1861 William Platt wrote that, "Some engaged in it [blockade running] from patriotism, some for the big profits made. The routes generally followed were by the Point of Rocks, then across the Potomac, or shipped down to the Eastern Shore, and they run across the bay by night." A combination of commercial necessity and secessionist politics compelled watermen to organize the movement of goods along myriad circuitous routes to circumvent the closely guarded land border separating the two warring capitals of Washington, D.C., and Richmond. Unlike the blockade running steamships that brought European products directly into the southern harbors of Wilmington, Charleston and New Orleans, illicit traffic on the Chesapeake involved many more small cargos.

Southern plantation owners believed that England would supply Confederate war needs in order to guarantee the ready availability of their cotton. Because there were few deep-water ports south of the Chesapeake Bay, European imports normally arrived overland from northern ports. Leading into the war, the Confederacy had to establish European trade routes that were independent of the Union states. Overland routes to haul goods north into Virginia were not well established either, so the new Confederate capital of Richmond remained dependent on the northern imports that had been cut off by the closing of the border along the Potomac. Levi White, called the "prince of smugglers" in Baltimore, bought everything from potassium and tin to uniform buttons in New York or Philadelphia and then hired watermen to move his cargos south along the bay and overland to Richmond. Brokered European shipments were arranged in Bermuda and Nassau, so that southern cotton and tobacco exchanged hands for the imports. Along the Potomac border, however, payment was usually arranged at point of departure or in small towns where smugglers warehoused their goods. Log canoes and pungies swarmed the bay's creeks and inlets, offloading directly onto wagons on the opposite shore. Chesapeake cargos also differed from direct European shipments in two types of passenger traffic. Crossing south were Southern families who left their besieged homes to stay with relatives south of the battle lines and Eastern Shore men circumventing the Union lines to soldier in the Confederate army or to serve as spies delivering information to Richmond.

On April 20, 1861, one day after President Lincoln and General Winfield Scott enacted a blockade of the secessionist states, commandant of the Norfolk naval yard Captain McCauley partially destroyed and abandoned the largest United States naval facility in Norfolk to the Confederate forces that were massing in the city. The undestroyed armaments from Norfolk fortified Confederate forts along the eastern seaboard, the Confederate fleet was strengthened, and Union shipbuilding was stymied just as the navy was evolving from sail to steam vessels. Of the five steam frigates that were available for service at the beginning of the war, all were deep draft vessels that were ill suited for chasing fast boats into the shallows along the east coast of the U.S. According to Roswell Lamson, Sailing Master of the *USS Pawnee*, in a letter to his fiancée Kate Buckingham, "This entire coast is but a network of islands, and innumerable inlets connecting at intervals with the ocean by channels of considerable depth … In these passages lay numbers of small craft ready to take advantage of a dark night, or of a storm that should drive our cruisers off the coast." He went on to explain



The Iron-Clad Barataria *attacked by Rebel Guerillas. Harpers Weekly, May 9, 1863.*

that an outer blockade had been established off the coast, but it was not as effective as the inner blockade to which he was detailed, "Though the duty is far less pleasant on account of the heat and the miasma from the swamps." Due to the lack of boats to defend the long coastline, the Union blockade was established gradually and ineffectively, which allowed smugglers to establish regular routes.

The *Pawnee* was one of only 14 shallow draft vessels that were tasked to patrol the Potomac River, both to guard against a water invasion of Washington, D.C., and to police the border between Maryland and Virginia. The Potomac Flotilla, under the command of James H. Ward, "replaced channel markers that had been removed by Virginians," and seized fishing vessels of all types that were re-tasked to convey supplies across the MD-VA border that runs along the river. The fact that the Flotilla's main task became the interdiction of smuggled goods along the border, rather than engaging Confederate gun emplacements along the river, evidences the amount of shallow water blockade running that took place throughout the Civil War. Actually apprehending those smugglers was an immense task for so few boats. According to Richard West of the U.S. Naval Academy, "Schooners would load in Baltimore and clear for Deal's Island or Snow Hill in Maryland, wait for a suitable night, and then cross to York River and discharge in Mobjack Bay." The watermen who smuggled goods across the Chesapeake were the same men who tonged oysters in the winter, fished in the summer and trapped crabs through the fall. Due to the nature of hostilities on the Chesapeake Bay, any vessel was likely to be attacked or commandeered at any time. This effectively curtailed the watermen's daily trade at exactly the same time when there was relatively easy money to be made smuggling goods across what was in effect their back yard.

Until just before the Civil War, landowners on the Eastern Shore of Maryland and Virginia owned slaves to work their lands and had been relatively well off compared to neighboring watermen. Local economic depression caused by the end of the slave economy enticed many families such as the Rowes and Evanses on Deal Island to begin working the water. The depressed economy on the Shore created an environment open to opportunities for quick profit. As staunchly independent businessmen who hauled their very existence from the waters of the Chesapeake, the Eastern Shore's watermen were not as much Confederate sympathizers as they were anti-Federalists. Most of the families on the islands had resisted the British less than 100 years before, and many felt the same about Federal occupation forces. Blockade running became a viable way for the occupied work force of the Chesapeake's Eastern Shore to generate income.

Southern sympathizers throughout the Eastern Shore and farm owners who thrived under the auspices of the slave economy fueled a cadre of pirates and saboteurs who took armed action against both Federal troops and loyal Union businesses. Although many of the blockade-runners supplied transportation for these Northern secessionists, they were not usually confrontational, as they stood to lose their livelihood when their boats were confiscated by the Flotilla. The most flagrant of the early saboteurs was Richard "Zarvona" Thomas. He dressed as a woman to board the commercial steamer *St. Nicholas* in Baltimore and commandeered the boat. Along with his crew, hidden among the passengers, he intended to attack Union gunboats along the Potomac. John Taylor Wood, previously a Naval Academy professor, most likely developed the first small boat trailer. He fitted whaling boats onto wagons that were then hauled to the Potomac. Peter Smith, a waterman who was oystering in the York River, was pressed into service as his guide. Smith appears to have joined willingly once he heard Wood's plan and his gallant apology for separating him from his family. On October 28, 1862, Wood's boats were launched on the 14-ton *Alleghanian*; they unloaded what they could of the cargo and the rest was burned along with the ship. Most of these civilian enterprises, directed against the Union's commercial shipping, were initially designed to destroy the boats of the Potomac Flotilla that threatened the illicit trade across the Potomac. In the summer of 1861 Lt. William Budd, acting master of the Flotilla's *USS Resolute*, reported that St. Mary's and Charles Counties had more supplies stockpiled than could be consumed by its residents in three years. Boats crossed nightly from Budd's Ferry, Maryland to Quantico Creek, Virginia, and although some were caught, local citizens raised the alarm when armed launches arrived to patrol the narrow width of the Potomac.

George Dent appeared to be one of those citizens. His home overlooked the river above Mathias Point and much of the mail from Virginia was addressed in his care to forward across the Union lines. But he was much more than a postman. When he spotted the Flotilla's boats patrolling the river, he used signal lanterns to warn rebels preparing to cross from Virginia. He also ferried mail and passengers across the narrows in several rowed boats, oarlocks wrapped to muffle the noise, until he was captured on the Virginia shore by Colonel Graham of the New York Infantry and arrested for espionage. When the Flotilla attempted to confiscate docked boats that could be used for smuggling, the Confederates left decoy boats in the marshes and attacked the federal troops when they came to destroy them. The *USS Resolute* lost three men in one attack below Mathias Point to this ploy. Tensions increased between the Eastern Shore locals and Federal troops, as any buildings suspected of housing contraband along either coastline were shelled by the Flotilla to drive away rebels and then burned.

Farther south on the Eastern Shore of Virginia, Revel Evans and his wife owned a small plot of land on the Pungoteague River and appeared to make a living fishing and tonging oysters. He had proclaimed his loyalty to the Union, as was necessary for all Virginians living under the occupation of General Lockwood. An article in the *Kansas City Times*, printed 30 years after the surrender at Appomatox, interviewed Evans regarding his escapades. He was suspected of but never caught running contraband into Virginia. He regaled the paper with a story about a shipment of hoopskirts, which were all the fashion in Richmond. Of all the cargos that he ferried across the Chesapeake, the hoopskirts were what stood out in his mind, leaving us to assume that his motives were much more pecuniary than political. In case he was seen by a "revenue cutter," he tied floats to the hoopskirts, which had been tied with paper string, so he might retrieve them if forced to throw them overboard.

That was exactly what happened, and in his words, "I tuck down my sails and waited quiet like til the cutter should git past. But bless your soul, what d'ye think them blamed hoopskirts done? Why, the salt water jes naturally melted that paper string and them skirts riz high up and floated on top of the water. There they waz, lookin' like great big white mountains, all around me" (*Kansas City Times*, 1891). It was a false alarm and the ladies of Richmond remained fashionable that year. The other incident, which Evans related to his interviewer, was bringing "two young men of the Confederacy across." They brought a slave with them who later reported Revel to the Union army in Drummondtown. Luckily, Revel Evans had "loyal" Union friends who gave evidence that he was elsewhere on the night in question. Both incidents were likely recorded for their audience appeal. However, the article indicates Evan's cavalier attitude towards the Federal forces patrolling the border, rather than a loyalty to Confederate politics.

On Myrtle Grove farm, just to the south in Hack's Neck, VA, Captain Major Guy was preparing for a run across the Chesapeake and had a house full of contraband. Several nighttime trips from country stores with packhorse or mule were usually required to amass enough goods for a trip across the bay. When a Federal soldier approached Captain Guy's house, his Unionist neighbor George W. Scott warned him of the danger and then met the soldier with a bottle of whiskey, regaling him with tales of his time with the United States Army in the Mexican War. The soldier asked if there was contraband in the area and Scott answered him, "Hell no! Nobody here runs the blockade!" This story is recounted in an Accomack County family's verbal history and points out the acceptance of blockade running as an economic necessity.

According to J.E. Mears' account, *Hack's Neck and its People: Past and Present*, John, James and Teakle Bennett regularly crossed the Chesapeake in "small canoes" past Tangier Island into the mouth of the Potomac. They were all hunted throughout the war. James' story is particularly rife with narrow escapes through windows of friends' houses, sneaking disguised past soldiers who waited for him to arrive at his home and dowsing a guard and his weapon with a bucket of well water after asking for "one last drink from the family well." Toward the end of the war his pregnant wife was caught in a sweep of suspected blockade-runners on Hack's Neck. Soon after her release, she died from complications of childbirth due to exposure and "treatment endured while imprisoned." James watched the funeral from afar, but was never captured until after Appomattox. He walked up to a Federal officer and said, "Now that General Lee has surrendered, I surrender," giving up the struggle when he no longer had a paying customer to the west.

All the blockade-runners were inventive by nature. They hid sails in beds and baby's cribs, and fitted the hulls of their boats with plugged holes that were opened to sink the boats in order to hide them from searching troops. Most primary sources of the time refer to "small canoes," which, taken in modern context, is misleading. The Eastern Shore log canoe had a hull that was hollowed out of several joined logs. The bottom was shaped for stability and speed, with rising planks added to achieve the desired depth in the canoe. The hull was usually fitted for two masts, to be rigged with a jib for a total of three sails and a bowsprit to extend the forestay and the jib's sail area. The canoes had enough beam to be stable under sail and could reach up to 50 feet in length. These qualities created a craft that sat low in the water, yet was able to handle enough sail to make her faster than any other sailing vessel on the bay. The log canoe shipped heavy cargos, as it was designed to carry oysters, and was close to invisible from a distance without her sails.

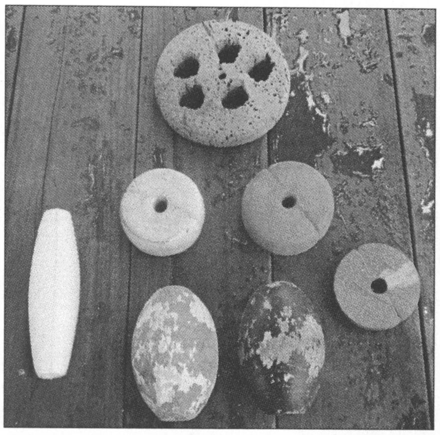
The Potomac Flotilla's Commodore Harwood referred to a smuggler known only as "Sable" with "a large canoe … She has a white bottom, dark gunwales, two leg-of-mutton sails, foresail bright and new, main sail not more than half as large as the fore, of dark color, mildewed and old. [Her depot] is in Smith's Creek … to Mr. Edward Able's landing … supplied with various articles from a store kept by two persons – Taylor and Bean." With all this information in the hands of the Union forces hunting him, the smuggler himself avoided apprehension. Allan Pinkerton's *The Spy in the Rebellion* tells the story of detective Timothy Webster crossing to the York River with Kent Marshall. He carried 13 passengers – along with mail and merchandise – in a canoe that Marshall claimed would outrun any Federal gunboats. The sail powered vessels, which the blockade-runners built themselves, were the fastest on the Chesapeake Bay. With over 12,000 miles of estuary coastline, the risk of getting caught was low. Fare for a single passenger could be as much as $20 a head, making the trip extremely profitable. Smugglers were stockpiling goods that they wished to move discreetly across the Chesapeake, and the stationary activity of tonging oysters had turned watermen into sitting targets on the Bay. Many Eastern Shore families, including that of William "Captain Bill" Somers, have handed down verbal histories of blockade running. In the 1860 Accomack County census, Captain Bill was listed as a 28-year-old sailor with personal property valued at $500. This record suggests a small commercial boat that could certainly have been used to smuggle contraband across the bay. Because there were so many small boats moving on the Chesapeake Bay during the Civil War, most of the verifiable records of blockade running are reports of individuals who were caught. The watermen who weren't caught are numerous. They each had their own reason for running the Union blockade, but primary sources suggest that compensation for the trip made it well worth raising sail to challenge the cumbersome gunships of the Potomac Flotilla.

Dan Norris is a Salisbury University English major who is interning in his senior year at the Nabb Research Center. He writes about the historical adventures of sailors, watermen and pirates, and hopes to pursue a writing career on the Eastern Shore.

Hanging and Fishing Gill Nets on the Nanticoke River

By Scott Baker

Currently I (Scott Baker) teach at Washington High School in Somerset County, MD. While working toward my master's in secondary education, I was given the opportunity to complete an internship at the Nabb Center in coordination with Salisbury University. While completing some of my University requirements, I undertook the creation of a manual related to commercial fishing on the Nanticoke River. A copy of this manual has been given to the Nabb Center. Although I am currently a teacher, my commercial background includes years of experience crabbing (trot lining), fishing (gill net) and oystering (dredging) from early childhood until the present. Various oral histories, along with fishing and net hanging techniques explained in the manual, can be directly credited to my father, Gary Baker, and my uncle, Ed Baker. Much of their knowledge had been passed along orally for decades by past fishermen in the local area. In the future I hope to expand my work on the cultural history of commercial fisheries on Delmarva.



Floats or corks used on top of the line of net. Courtesy Scott Baker.

Cultural history is an interesting concept within the core of historical study. The study of small, regionalized, local folklore and legends is becoming a lost art. Every day dozens of dialects, techniques, stories and traditions are lost to our fast-paced society. Writing down and recording this information must be done before it is completely gone. One of my true desires is to find and learn more about the cultural history of Delmarva. Over time, I have realized that cultural history has surrounded me for much of my life. Many of the great storytellers of the Dorchester and Wicomico region of the Lower Shore have passed away during my lifetime. I can only remember them through faded glimpses of my childhood. Recently I have come to the conclusion that many of the things I have experienced are also unique and will be nonexistent for future generations.

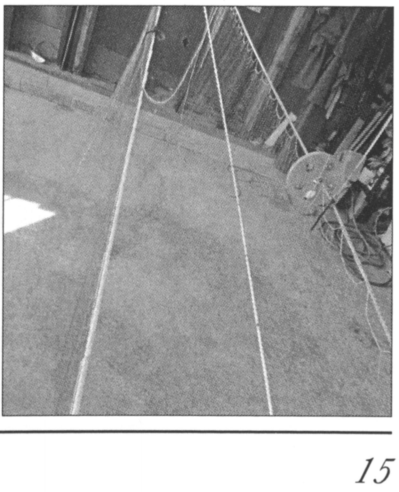
I recently had a conversation with a local man who was raised in Ocean City. We both came to the conclusion that the massive changes in the local area in the past five decades are due to the building of dual highways on Delmarva. Within three generations, Delmarva has drastically changed and will continue to do so. Younger generations do not embrace the ways of the older generations. They move on with technology, new careers and new interests. Yet some things from the local culture still remain and continue to bring people and families together. This thought leads me to reflect on my full-time career as a public educator.

Everyone with children is aware that Christmas break, or winter break as it is now known, is highly anticipated by youth throughout the nation. This is always evident on the Lower Shore as mid-December approaches. Of course, it should also be noted that teachers also anticipate this break with much eagerness and expectation. Just before break this winter I was awestruck by a conversation I had with some of my Advanced Placement history students. These students are on college track and take my course in an attempt to earn college credit. I was amazed to find out that two of my students were going to work over the break for their families – hanging gill nets. Although I am aware that fishing is still prevalent on the Lower Shore, this particular conversation came as a big surprise. Some of my most dedicated and advanced students were doing the same thing I did during winter break 15 years earlier; ironically, this is a task with which many people who grow up in the local area are completely unfamiliar. Many Shore natives have baited trotlines, shucked oysters and cleaned fish, but net hanging is a more uncommon skill. Gill net fishing is still a viable industry in the bay, but is far outdone by crabbing and the newly revitalized oyster fishery. To put things in perspective, the total participants in the gill net fishery in the Chesapeake Bay are dwarfed by the total participants in the commercial crabbing industry.

This conversation with my students about hanging net and commercial fishing led me to reaccess my theory on the relevance of gill netting and its impact on local culture. I realized that this information should be recorded for future generations. As a history teacher, I preach that it is important to understand the traditions of the past, while still evolving into the future.

This manual will present gill net hanging and fishing in the light of old and new techniques. There are countless ways to catch fish and countless ways to hang a net; I will not present all of them, only a few that I have been accustomed to in my lifetime.

Reflecting on the past, consider these facts: In my grandfather's lifetime sturgeon fishing disappeared, in my father's lifetime shad fishing disappeared, and in my lifetime herring fishing has disappeared. All of these fisheries were once important on the Nanticoke River. How many of today's fisheries will remain on the Nanticoke or even in the Chesapeake Bay in another 50 years? Some fisheries, such as turtle potting and crab pounding, have so few participants that these fisheries could be considered endangered or nearly extinct. As gill net fishing continues to lose relevance bay-wide, I offer you a small look at a way of life for some and a hobby for others. And as some types of gill netting – particularly drift-gill netting – are becoming lost arts, I hope to record and share some of this local history of Delmarva.



Net designed to be used as a drift-gill net.

Skipjack: For Dorchester County It Was More than a Boat

By Tom Bradshaw

Skipjack *magazines from South Dorchester High and Cambridge South Dorchester High with both the rope logo and block letter logo. Note the difference between the original typewritten style on the left and the last issue using 1980s computer technology.*

For more than a century, when you mentioned the word "Skipjack," everyone knew that it was a single-masted two-sail vessel used to dredge for oysters in the winter months and carry freight to Baltimore or Annapolis in the summer months. History records show that the first such vessel, the *Eva*, was built at the head of Cambridge Creek in the late 1800s. Skipjacks were continuously built in Dorchester until the mid-20th century. The last one built here was the county flagship, *Nathan of Dorchester*.

In the early 1970s, however, skipjack would become a project for some students and a class advisor at the former South Dorchester High School. Today, that project is considered years ahead of its time. The idea came from a project that was started in 1966 at the Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School in Georgia. A newly hired teacher, Eliot Wiggington, was fascinated by the legends and lore of the area, and wanted a way to make English class interesting to his students. The students chose to do a magazine, with some of the writings being about the families and their way of life in southern Appalachia. Thus *Foxfire Magazine*, a quarterly publication, was born. Students at Rabun County High School are still producing *Foxfire Magazine* twice a year. The idea behind the Foxfire project soon caught on in other areas of the country; Dorchester County was one of those areas.

The Skipjack Project, according to an article in the April 7, 1974, edition of *The Baltimore Sun*, came into being at the invitation of IDEAS (Institutional Development and Economic Affairs), a non-profit public corporation that received support from the government, private foundations and the public. Since many families had lived here for generations and they had carried on many of the traditions and way of life of their ancestors, the IDEAS group thought that this area was a good place to start a project like Foxfire. The group approached Diane Romsburg, then a teacher's aide at South Dorchester High School, to discuss the project. They later sent her to the Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School to see how the students gathered their information, interviewed the locals, transcribed the interviews and eventually put it all together in their magazine. A couple of students from South Dorchester High were also sent to Georgia to see how the *Foxfire Magazine* was done.

With the gift of two tape recorders and two cameras from the IDEAS group, the Skipjack Project was born. The project name was chosen by the students who would be the first staff members. The first issue was produced for the winter of 1973. Students went into the communities of South Dorchester – often after school, on the weekends and sometimes during school hours – interviewing members of the South Dorchester communities about life on the water and in the marshes, and about other traditions. One of the interesting things about this magazine was that, like *Foxfire*, its sister project, the stories were written using the local dialect. For example, the word "oyster" in the local dialect is "arster." The sailing oyster fleet is often referred to as dredge boats, but in the local dialect they are "drudge boats." The school had no facilities to print and publish the magazine, so it was done offsite. Once the students had transcribed the tapes and written the stories, they did the layout of the photos, drawings and text. Then it was taken to the Board of Education Office in Salisbury and printed on their offset press. Proceeds from subscriptions gathered by the students were used to pay for the paper and the printing service. The first issue of *Skipjack* had articles describing the vessel from which the magazine took its name, including life aboard a skipjack. Subsequent issues went on to record stories of vessel repair and maintenance, crab pot making, model boat building, and other local lore, legends and ways of life in the fishing communities of South Dorchester. Local recipes were also included.

With the consolidation of the Cambridge High School and the South Dorchester High School into the newly built Cambridge South Dorchester High (CSD) for the 1976/77 school year, the fate of the *Skipjack Magazine* project was uncertain. Class advisor Diane Romsburg chose not to go to the new school, and it was not clear if the class would be picked up – even as an elective course. A fellow teacher at South Dorchester High, Morley Jull, went to the new school and took over the project. The class was kept as an elective for 10th through 12th grades, and a newly incorporated nonprofit was created with its own board of trustees. This was announced in a letter to subscribers in the spring 1977 issue from class advisor Jull. He went on in the letter to state, "Further, and maybe this is the most important, this action insures that the end product of the students' efforts (stories, tapes and photographs) will always belong to the community." Here at CSD High, with the new class advisor, students did much the same as they did at South Dorchester High: conducted interviews, took photographs and did page layout for the magazine. But now they also did the photo developing and in-house publishing. With the integration of the two high schools, the magazine now included stories from Cambridge and its surrounding communities.

The Skipjack project continued under Jull until he retired in 1981. In the 1981/82 school year, English teacher Judy Howell took over as advisor. This was also the time during which I joined the staff. Howell thought the magazine needed a fresh look; the original title script in cursive with the appearance of rope was outdated. A contest was held for the new logo, and the bold script of upright letters was chosen. The magazine was still put out on a quarterly basis. Then the area that the magazine covered was expanded; Vienna and the surrounding areas were included since I had extended family there. The staff was still able to leave during school hours to do interviews and photography, as had been the practice in previous years.

The last issue was put out in June 1983, and the class was dropped a couple of years afterward. There was no longer educational interest in the project. The nonprofit that was formed as a part of the Skipjack project seems to have faded away – just as had the magazine. When Howell retired, the files of interviews and photos (what could be found of them) were donated to the Dorchester County Historical Society in Cambridge. Many of the folks whose stories were recorded by the students of both high schools have long since passed. We are fortunate that there was the interest and foresight to do this project. Today recording oral histories is an up-and-coming thing; the Skipjack project was such a project and was years ahead of its time. *Skipjack* just scratched the surface of Dorchester history, legend and lore. Several people at the Historical Society would like to see the Skipjack project brought back as a collaborative effort with an advisory board and students from both North Dorchester and Cambridge South Dorchester High Schools.

Editor's note: The Nabb Center has the first five volumes of *Foxfire* in its stacks. It also has several issues of the *Skipjack* that have been bound and placed with Nabb's periodicals.

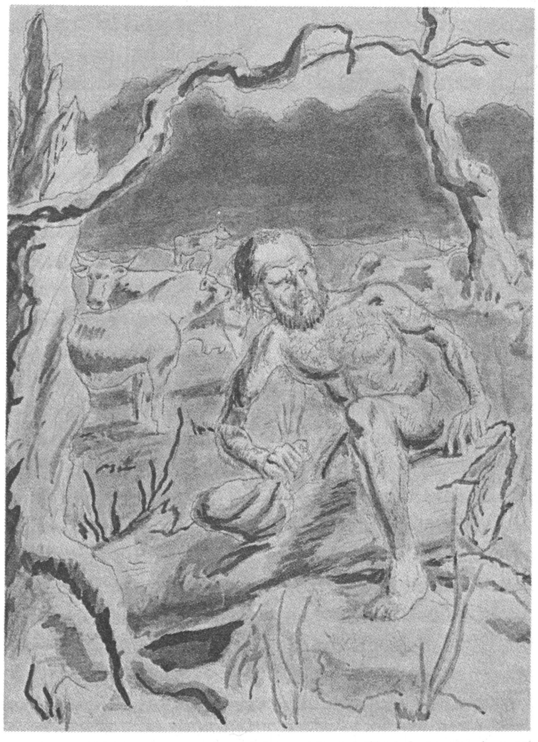
Tom Bradshaw, a member of the Dorchester County Council, has also served as the president of the Vienna Heritage Foundation board of directors and as curator of the Vienna Heritage Museum.

The Wild Man of Crocheron: Non-urban Legends and Dorchester County History

By Phillip Hesser

"It's said that Mack Willey stayed out in the marsh with the cows and grew up wild, but I don't think he grew up wilder than the rest of them."
-Wylie "Gator" Abbott

In her book *Haunted Eastern Shore,* Mindie Burgoyne relates an account of a cowman or "wildman" of Crocheron by G. Lake Wilson of Cabin Creek. At first glance, the account is simply a scary story, a tale that could be told around a bonfire or by the flickering light of an oil lamp. The story begins in the South Dorchester village of Crocheron, where a mistreated "home boy" (a young orphan who is taken in by another family) runs away from his guardian. Within a year of this boy's disappearance, a figure is seen in the marshes living with the cows that are put out to pasture there and surviving on their milk. Although very wary of people, he is caught one day and discovered to be the missing home boy. His hair long and shaggy, his skin darkened by the sun, he wears a burlap bag and has lost the power of speech. This wildman (as he became known) eventually was committed to the State Hospital at Cambridge.



Soon after the Civil War rumors spread near Robbins and Shorter's Wharf about a man who grazed and roamed with cows for over three years. This is an artist's concept of the "cow man" with the "grass sack" he used to conceal his nudity. When captured and rehabilitated the man always referred to himself as "Um."

"Cow man" as pictured in It Happened in Dorchester
Courtesy of Brice Stump.

It is easy to imagine how the account, enlivened by the right storyteller, could become part of the lore of South Dorchester County, receiving embellishment with each generation. However, the people of Crocheron, who likely would have embraced the story since it was set in the marshes behind their own homes, do not know the tale of the wildman. In fact, the story may be only tangentially connected with Crocheron. It is nonetheless a tale with roots in South Dorchester and links with the history of the county. It is an account with many gaps, but a narrative whose fragments may reveal much about life "Down Below in Dorchester County" during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The story may be a variant of the tale of Mack (or Mac) Willey, the so-called "Cow Man" or "Wild Man" of Robbins, as variously recounted by Brice Stump, A.M. Foley, Hal Roth and John S. "Pat" Neild[5]. Stump's account, the first published mention of the wild man, is the most complete and compelling. Drawing from accounts of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Abbott of

Shorter's Wharf, Stump describes a wildman figure similar to Wilson's description:

> The face was covered with a thick tangled layer of hair. Small balls of clay and dirt had gathered in the long hair.... In one hand was a burlap sack. It was a man and he was nude.... [H]e had seen the Cow Man of Robbins.... He heard that this wild man ate marsh grass and often suckled from the cows.....

Stump's story takes a different turn from that of Wilson. Stump does not discuss Mack as a home boy, but rather the son of a witch in Bestpitch (a few miles as the crow flies from Robbins). According to Stump's article about Bestpitch (in the same collection as his piece about the Wild Man of Robbins), the lady in question had "a big nose, long hair and wrinkles all over her face." She was a trapper and "a hard-looking and acting subject." A separate reference to the witch of Bestpitch in the article indicates that people kept an eye on the woman in question and believed that she could cross the waters of the marsh without getting wet, turn a person into a bug and enter a bedroom through a keyhole and "ride you" throughout the night. Roth makes the direct connection between the witch and the wild man, quoting his informant as saying, "they say he was that witch's boy. I don't know who his pappy was. If she was a witch, maybe he never had no pappy."

Stump also writes of a different fate for the wild man. Sam Abbott and Planner Robbins capture Willey and Sam takes him in to "raise" him. Eventually Mack marries and moves with his wife Nellie to a shack at Robbins Landing (east of Robbins along the Blackwater River), where he acquires a team of oxen and sells cord wood to his neighbors in Robbins Landing, Shorters Wharf, and Robbins, supplementing his earnings as a woodchopper by fishing and trapping. Nellie Willey works at one of the local canneries. Although neither Mack nor Nellie "had any knowledge of the power of money or its value," according to Stump, "they were seldom shortchanged" when Mack went to the store to buy supplies.

Mack, who was born during the Civil War years according to Mrs. Arthur Abbott, lives into the 1940s, bedridden for the last three years of his life following a stroke. After Mack's death, Nellie lives another 15 years with a neighbor at Robbins Landing. As Stump concludes, "a wild man, who grazed with cows and ran nude, was rehabilitated and probably lived a life as good as could be expected. The kindness of their neighbors was truly their staff of life."

A boy – perhaps an orphan – who was raised in South Dorchester County, a man who lived with the cattle on the edge of the marshes, a husband who made a modest home at Robbins Landing with his wife, Mack Willey might well have been the stuff of folklore. At the very least, his life would have been largely undocumented and his reputation would have been marked by hearsay and legend. Yet few American lives entirely escape notice in the public record. Mack's life in fact shows up in several places when one adjusts for variations on names, spellings and birth dates. These references, when added to the testimony of others, may provide a fuller sense of his life and circumstances.

A reference from 1930 can provide the first clue to Mack's public life. An obituary in the *Daily Banner* for September 29, 1930, records the death of a Mrs. Frances Tauser of Bestpitch Ferry at the age of 105. Her sole surviving relative is listed as her son Mack Willey of Robbins. A member of the Kanes (Keenes) Ditch Methodist Church, she had lived at Bestpitch Ferry and had died at the home of Charles Wachsmuth. In the census record of that year, she is listed as 104-year-old Frances "Touser," a "roomer" at the home of Wachsmuth, who is listed as a 63-year-old trapper, living next door to store owner and fur merchant Jesse B. Wall at Bestpitch Ferry.

Although she is not listed in the 1920 census, Mack's mother turns up in the 1910 record as a 70-year-old housekeeper living with Wachsmuth, who is listed as a sailor and who was recorded as a farmer in the 1920 record. In the 1900 census as "Frances Tozour," she is a 60-year-old servant and widow working for Wachsmuth as a day laborer. The census also indicates that Frances has one surviving child of four. In the next available census of 1880, 43-year-old "Francis Willey" lives with farm laborer Shadrac Towzer (born in New Jersey in 1813) as a servant with five-year-old son James H. Willey and 17-year-old son Michael, a farm laborer. Could this "Michael Willey" be Mack?

Since there is no Francis/Frances Willey listed in the 1870 census, one might consider searching for a Mary Frances, given the common association of those names. A Mary Willey is listed in the 1870 census as the 50-year-old (perhaps 45-year-old, if the ages of the husband and wife are confused) spouse of Robert Willey. The Willeys are listed with two children, 11-year-old Elizabeth and 7-year-old Markey/Mackey. After this point, there are no further references to Robert or Elizabeth Willey.

The 1880 census reference is the final listing that shows Mack living with his mother Frances. The next census report of "Mac Willey" comes in 1900. He is listed as a farm laborer, born in 1865 and living in Lakes District (presumably in the Robbins-Robbins Landing area) with his wife Sarah E. (born 1869), his mother-in-law Sarah E. Insley, brother-in-law Thomas Insley (listed as a sailor) and 2-year-old Howard Wroten, who is listed as a lodger. Mack and Sarah are reported as having been married two years. Mack, Sarah, and Sarah's mother are recorded as not being able to read or write. Sarah is listed as having had one child, but no child currently living.

The 1910 census lists fur trapper "Mack Welley," born in 1860, his wife "Sarah E.N." (the last initial likely for Nellie) Welley and "son" Charles Welley (born in 1888), who is a streetcar conductor. Given that there are no children listed for Mack and no living children listed for Sarah-Nellie, it is likely that Charles was adopted or should have been listed as a lodger. Mack and Sarah-Nellie disappear from the record in 1920 but reappear again in 1930. He is listed as a 75-year-old, Sarah as a 60-year-old. No occupation is listed for either. Maryland lists the death of a Mack Willey of Dorchester County on December 8, 1932, and of Sarah E. Willey in 1947. In his account *Having My Say*, Wylie Abbott recalls that Nellie Willey, widow of Mack, was infirm and lived with his grandmother Lola Hurley Abbott during his lifetime – although she is not listed in Mrs. Abbott's household in the 1940 census. Stump's account somewhat confirms the interval between the deaths of Mack and Nellie – although he also indicates that Mack lived into his 80s and died in the 1940s, as does Roth who also attests to Mack's living into the '40s and dying at an advanced age.

An account from a missionary of the American Sunday School Union in Texas may offer insight into Mack's story. The "wild boy of the mountains" was the son of "an ignorant and brutal wretch." The boy showed "a desire for solitude" and stayed in his father's cabin only when driven there by hunger. Eventually he disappeared and was given up for dead, when herders seeking their cattle discovered and captured a 12-year-old boy covered with long hair, capable only of "growling like a wolf." "Cross and sullen," he escaped from his captors and was listed as at large in the account.

According to Dave Robbins' account, Mack grew up with his mother on Simmons or Beckers Island, across the Blackwater from Robbins between Bestpitch and Keenes Ditch near the present-day Greenbriar Swamp tract of the Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge, where a dirt road that once connected the two communities still exists. Robbins adds that Mack grew up with no playmates except for the cows.

Interpreting the Wilson account of the Wildman of Crocheron with the Wild Boy story from Texas, one can imagine a story that might have sent Mack into the wilds of Dorchester County. Living with his mother, who was a servant to and later assumed the surname of farm laborer Shadrac Towzer, perhaps the teenaged Mack – a farm laborer himself in the Census – also showed the Texan wild boy's "desire for solitude" in getting away from his life as a home boy. As the young Harriet Tubman (who grew up only a few miles away from Simmons/Beckers Island) was uncomfortable with being a home girl and was sent into the marshes to tend her employer's muskrat traps, Mack perhaps either sought to tend the cows or fled to the marshes and stands of fast land where they grazed to escape the abusive situation described by Wilson.

Regardless of the circumstances, young Mack could have survived much – if not all of – the year with the cattle, returning to his mother to escape the worst winter weather. Perhaps an Irish journal offers insight about a life with the cows, quoting a cowherd:

> What employment is better than eating curds and new milk in the morning… [and at dinnertime] sucking the teat of [a black spotted cow]….

Born with – or acquiring through his lonely life – deficits in speech and social interaction, Mack nonetheless was not the "cross and sullen" cowboy of Texas. Once he was captured and taken in by Sam Abbott, Mack learned to live among the people of Robbins and married Sarah/Nellie in 1898.

Having perhaps lived a life of nearly 20 years on the margins of society, Mack lives over 30 years with Nellie in Robbins Landing, where they support themselves through doing chores on farms, wood chopping in summer, trapping in winter and (in the case of Nellie) working in a cannery in season – always looked after by their neighbors. Their life is a rich and lively one, sharing their house with several ducks, chickens, cats and a dog. When they are not visiting their neighbors, Mack plays the accordion and Nellie sings "The Happy Miller," and both take the song faster and faster, nearly falling out of their chairs in their spirited rendition.

For his part, Mack sees to the funeral and burial of his mother Frances in 1930. When he has a stroke, he is cared for by Nellie, attended to by a local doctor without charge, and looked after by the community. When he dies, one of his neighbors collects for the funeral and has him buried near his mother at Sandy Island Cemetery near Robbins. When Nellie is unable to take care of herself, her neighbor Lola Hurley Abbott takes her in during the last years of her life.

To understand how Mack might have become the Cow Man of Crocheron, it may be helpful to look at two other references. The first reference, also reported in an article by Brice Stump, recounts the tale of the wildmen of Andrews (a community a few miles to the west of Robbins), Walter and Guy Hart. In an account related by Andy Nuñez, Walter and Guy "Hunt" (sic) were "two unkept, backward brothers from Dorchester County." Nuñez tells their story in a single paragraph:

> One died in jail in 1912, and the other lived out his life institutionalized at the Cambridge mental facility until 1960. Dirty, ragged, and longhaired, they were more like animals than humans and were mistreated by their equally ignorant parents….

As reported by Stump, the actual story of the Hart brothers is somewhat different. It is rumored that the two boys live in the attic or barn of their father, Ben Hart, and go out only at night to forage for food, eating raw chicken or even beef. On one occasion around 1912, however, Guy appeared at a camp meeting in Lakesville, where he was teased by the other boys and, as a result, pulled a pistol on them – a toy pistol as it turned out. Nonetheless the Sheriff, fearing the possibility of more violent behavior, went to Ben Hart's house to apprehend them.

A picture taken at the time of their arrest supports Stump's description of the two boys being filthy, dressed in rags and having unkempt hair and beards. In the years that followed rumors materialized about the Hart brothers having to be chased and roped to be taken into custody. Other stories circulated that Guy died after being jailed – perhaps drowning in a basin of water, and that the brothers clawed each other up in reaction to their being caged in jail.

Census and other records clarify the story researched and reported by Stump. In the 1900 census record, Benjamin J. Hart is residing with his wife of two years, Gertrude, and his three children from a previous marriage: Walter (born in 1882), Guy (born in 1885) and Bertie (born in 1887). By 1910, only Ben is living with Walter and Guy. Gertrude is divorced and living in Cambridge, while Bertie is a newlywed in Straits District. In the 1920 record Gertrude (listed as Gertie) is living with Ben once again in Andrews, while Guy is a laborer living with farmer Alfred Brinsfield – according to Stump the arresting officer of the Hart brothers. Walter is nowhere to be found. By 1930 both Ben and Gertie are no longer in the census records. Guy is still with Alfred Brinsfield as a farm laborer and Walter is living in the home of Walter Kirwan (Kriman in the census record) as a laborer on Kirwan's Farm, the farm of the Eastern Shore Hospital (where, according to Stump, he may have worked on the hospital farm with Kirwan's father Thomas Henry Kirwan). A 1942 draft registration lists Guy as a lodger with Zora Willin. The 1940 census reports that Walter is a lodger with Airey Rose. Guy dies in 1944 according to state records, while it is reported by Stump that Walter died in 1960.

In looking back at the story of the Hart brothers, one may consider the possibility of mental disabilities, as in the case of Mack Willey. In addition, the Stump article refers to the Hart farm being inundated by the Centennial Storm of 1876 and becoming mostly unfit to farm. Whatever the case, the age of Benjamin's father, Edward, does not appear in the census of 1900, where Benjamin is listed as a renter. Stump also suggests the poverty in relating the story of Benjamin combing a field he had plowed by lantern light to retrieve his two-cent pipe. Adding to the dire situation of the Hart brothers is the rumored role of the stepmother, Gertrude Eaton Hart, who is said to have relegated the brothers to the attic/loft and to have underfed them – forcing them to forage for food at night.

When compared with the stories and census records of the so-called wildmen Mack Willey, Guy Hart and Walter Hart, the account of G. Lake Wilson reveals much in what it reports and what it leaves out. The story of a bestial human who is captured and committed to an asylum owes something to the accounts of both Mack Willey and the Hart brothers. Yet, the story also owes something to the anecdote of the Wild Boy of Texas and similar stories and legends reaching back to the French "Wild Child" Victor of Aveyron.

One might be content to attribute the balance of these anecdotes to the realm of "non-urban" legend, if it were not for the cases of child neglect – especially in the case of children with mental or physical disabilities – that continue to play out in the present day. In the case of Mack Willey and the Hart brothers, we have the situation of a single parent in dire poverty seeking to provide for his/her children by remarrying (in the case of Ben Hart) or going to work in another household and eventually marrying or living with an employer (in the case of Frances Willey/Tauser). In these instances, a disabled child might be relegated to neglect by a stepparent (as was rumored in the case of the Hart brothers) or exploited as a home boy (perhaps in the case of Mack Willey). In either account, the wild children or wildmen become the subject of rumor when they run away and attempt to survive on forays in the woods and on the marshes.

Serving as more than folk tales involving cruel stepparents or harsh employers, these stories testify to the extremely thin margins of livelihood available to the people of South Dorchester County during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Families living without land or access to other livelihood (such as a boat for oystering or crabbing) saw those thin margins undercut to the extreme when they lost a spouse or assumed responsibility for children with special needs. While many families in South Dorchester saw their farms compromised by tides and storms and sought a living on the water or through trapping or logging, other families perhaps had no recourse but to become tenant farmers (as was the case of Ben Hart) or hired help (as was the case of Frances Willey). Although there are many accounts of stepparents providing loving and stable support for the families they take in with their marriages, there are others testifying to abuse and exploitation. The disabled children in the poverty-stricken households of two farm laborers, Ben Hart and Shadrac Towzer, would face a life of neglect, if not outright abuse.

In an era when state institutions were just beginning to see to the welfare of the vulnerable through poor farms and asylums, communities could cast a blind eye to or actively support wildmen, such as Mack Willey or the Hart brothers. Stump observes, "folks… didn't want to report the story [of the Hart brothers] to the authorities because, 'Ben Hart was such a nice man.'" In the case of Mack Willey, it is possible that his fate was not known if he lived in isolation on Beckers or Simmons Island, or if Frances Willey moved away from her home community to work for Shadrac Towzer. However, communities in fact took responsibility for the three young men. Walter Hart found a life tending the farm of Eastern Shore State Hospital under the care of Thomas Henry and his son Walter Kirwan. Guy Hart also tended a farm for Alfred Brinsfield, who may have been his arresting officer. Mack Willey, cared for by Sam Abbott, eventually settled in Robbins Landing, marrying Sarah (Nellie) Insley and making a living working on a farm, cutting wood and trapping. Their long and productive lives are a far cry from the alleged fate of the Wild Boy of Texas.

The account of G. Lake Wilson about the Wildman of Crocheron may owe much to the lore surrounding the lives of Mack Willey and the Hart brothers (including the reference to the state hospital farm where Walter Hart worked), but it does not explain the connection to Crocheron. This mystery may be solved by another look at the census records. A Mackey Willey of Bishops Head (which included what was to become Crocheron with the opening of a post office) was born in the 1860s – likely to George and Sarah Willey – and lived a life on the water until he died in December 1930, living at the home of John Pritchett as a boarder, as he is listed in the 1930 census. He may be listed in the 1880 census record as a Henry Willey, living as a sailor in the home of his father George, as is his brother Martin "Lonnie" Willey.

The story of the Wildman of Crocheron is much more than it seems at first glance. It is likely the story of confused identity – Mackey Willey for Mack Willey and Mack Willey for Walter and Guy Hart. The account as told in anecdotes and as documented in census and other records reveals much more. It is a story of wildman or wild boy lore, going back many centuries and perhaps relating the story of children who flee or are turned into the woods to survive. It is the story of communities that may cast a blind eye to or come together to protect vulnerable people with mental or physical disabilities. It is the story of people living on the margins when farms fail to support a struggling family, fighting for survival for themselves and their children when they lose a spouse and often seeking support through remarriage or hiring out – often to the detriment of the children who become abused step-children or home boys/home girls. Ultimately, it is the story of survival and recovery, of young men who go on with their lives after a period of abuse and neglect as productive, even self-supporting adults protected by fostering communities.

Finally, the story of the wildmen of South Dorchester County is a unique testimony to life down below. It is a story of livelihood frustrated and regained, of communities challenged and vindicated, of people resilient as the life that changes but endures, despite all that threatens it. It is a story that is bigger than any non-urban legend and deserves to be remembered for all of its tragedy and triumph.

Phillip Hesser, Ph.D., adjunct professor at Salisbury University and Wor-Wic Community College, writes and lectures about life and livelihood on the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed.

Dorchester in the Civil War:
"I never thought I should be draftid"

By Elora Amtower

LITTLE CHOPTANK OR HUDS
Hoopers Point
OYSTER CREEK
CHESAPEAKE
SLAUGHTER CREEK
Mrs M.A.Cator
TAYLORS ISLAND P.O.

Map from The 1877 Atlases and Other Early Maps of the Easter Shore or Maryland *showing the residence of Mrs. M.A. Cator on Taylors Island.*

Mary Ann and Thomas E. Cator of Dorchester County, MD, had several sons who grew to be farmers and merchants on the East Coast. Like any other family in the 1800s, the Cators used letters as a means of correspondence to stay connected with their relatives as long distances often separated them. Miles, though, would ultimately be preferable to the dissecting force that would soon threaten the stability of their happy relations.

The remains of the Cator family letters recently were donated to the Edward H. Nabb Research Center and are now stored in its archives. These letters hold key information of what life was like in Dorchester County and elsewhere for the rising middle class. In particular, there are several letters that illustrate the fear and anxiety families endured due to the draft during the later years of the Civil War.

The Civil War was a national conflict over how to run federal and state governments, and, secondly, a dispute over the expansion of slavery in the territories. Starting in 1860, the southern states not only seceded one by one from the United States, but they also crafted their own state-oriented governments by means of state constitutions. The emphasis on sectionalism was important to the South. Southerners preferred that state governments hold more power than a federal government, so the people would have more direct authority over their individual rights.

Each state, whether affiliated with the North or the South, had its own private issues. Maryland, in particular, was divided in several ways. Physically located between the North and the South, Maryland was torn in its loyalties, not wishing to leave the Union, but, at the same time, not approving of certain policies that were being forced upon the state. Ultimately, Maryland would remain part of the Union, but there were still conflicting interests among its people.

Although it is unclear which side the Cator family endorsed, it is clear that they suffered the same fears and suspense other families experienced due to military drafts. Drafts were implemented due to a decline in volunteers and willing recruits. Recruiting stations, which "mushroomed" in major cities all over Maryland, slowly lost their purpose. By 1864, the initial hype and excitement the war had generated was trickling to a stop; young men once eager to enlist, whether "desiring adventure" or "seeking a means of livelihood," now knew that war was no romantic adventure, but possibly a fatal commitment. As a result, during the last half of the Civil War, periodic drafts were put into effect to provide the military forces necessary to continue the struggle.

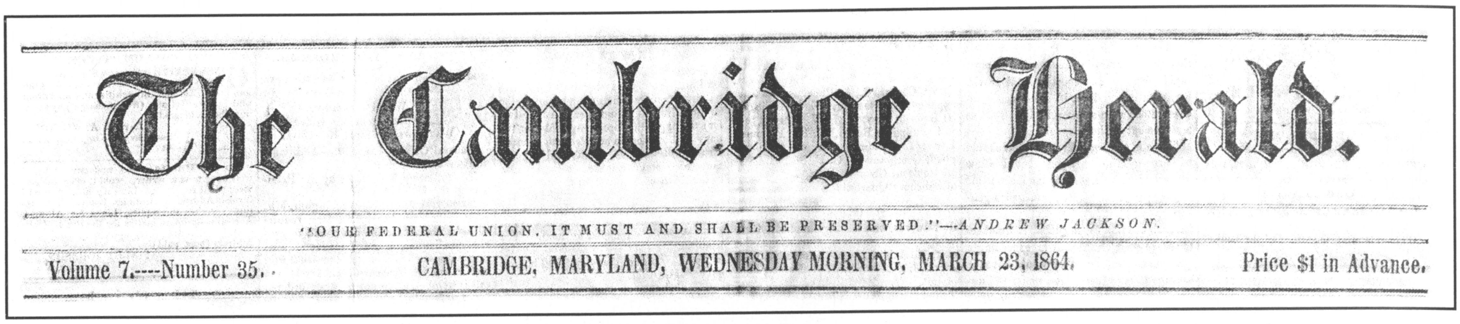
In their correspondence, John Cator and his mother Mary Ann Cator took precautions that many other families did to save young men from the war. Some men had run away to Canada to avoid the draft, but those who chose to stay in the United States, like John, had to come up with alternate means of residence. In some cases, letters were redirected to disguise the writer's location. On September 2, 1864, John, only 21 years old, writes to his mother about the uncertainties of the draft. He writes of his anxiety of not knowing exactly when it will happen, but knowing that it will soon come. Like many other men fearing the draft, John Cator attempted to hide, telling his mother, "I shall direct my letters to Mr. Goslin or Frank Travers and they will mail them over and by that means it will not be known who they are from." By directing his mail through family members, John used middlemen to hide his true location from post officers and other authorities. In case of his being discovered, John had his picture taken to document his most recent self for his mother and family. Mary Ann Cator also desired to keep her son safe from the war. She writes to him saying that she will try and find a substitute for him in case he should be drafted; she states, "I cannot bear the thought of being separated from you." These options were only available to those who could afford substitutes, and those who had the resources to travel or skill to work for money, providing means for escape at a moment's notice. Fortunately for the Cators, John was not drafted, but the agony of uncertainty took a toll on each of his loved ones.

The Civil War not only generated further political divides within the country, but the national conflict also caused rifts in family ties and the heartbreak of knowing a loved one would not return home. In the end, the Union succeeded and the country would mend over time – like the battle wounds of the soldiers and the families either mourning a death or rejoicing in a loved one's homecoming.

Elora Amtower, a junior at Salisbury University majoring in English with a concentration in literature, interned at the Nabb Center in fall 2013. She transcribed many of the 19th century letters found in the Evelyn Jefferson Fox Collection that were exchanged among members of the Cator and Travers families of Taylor's Island and Federalsburg.

Domestic Discord: The Civil War in Maryland

By Kendra Pain



The Cambridge Herald.

"OUR FEDERAL UNION, IT MUST AND SHALL BE PRESERVED!"—*ANDREW JACKSON.*

Volume 7.----Number 35. CAMBRIDGE, MARYLAND, WEDNESDAY MORNING, MARCH 23, 1864. Price $1 in Advance.

Banner from one of the newspapers from the Bayly Family Collection at the Nabb Research Center

Turmoil and discord were commonplace throughout America during the Civil War, a time in which brother fought brother and a single nation was pulled apart by its citizens. Maryland, in particular, felt the tension of the times; as a border state between the Northern Union and the Southern Confederacy, a clash of beliefs and values was unavoidable. By reading articles from three different Cambridge newspapers housed at the Nabb Center, the disunity of this period can truly be seen. The *Cambridge Democrat*, *Cambridge Herald* and *Cambridge Weekly Intelligencer* give insight to a critical period in America's history, and show divergent views of the conflict in Maryland during the Civil War.

The *Cambridge Democrat* was written for Marylanders who supported the Confederacy; the articles found in this newspaper described the Northerners as tyrants who sought to unlawfully suppress the South. One article that portrays the ideals of the paper is "The Land of the Free," written December 1861. This piece begins by comparing President Lincoln to the famous tyrant Napoleon, saying that "the mode in which Mr. Lincoln saves society in America varies in very few particulars from the treatment applied with much success by the original savior of society in France." The writer is adamant that Maryland is in a state of "absolute servitude with the outward forms of freedom" and even compares the President's actions toward Maryland to a "siege." Life as a secessionist in Maryland is portrayed as a brutal struggle against a government that has been completely corrupted. Although this author is extreme in his views and speculations, going so far as to say that the Baltimore police are criminals who are "the least reputable portion of the population … who, before they became policemen, were 'well known to police,'" he nonetheless gives important insight into everyday life during the 1860s. A large portion of Maryland supported the Confederacy; by showing the extreme opposition to the United States Government, the mood of that portion of the population can be better understood. Being trapped in a state which refuses to break away from the Union, having friends and family fight each other in conflicting armies, and being looked upon as a traitor for expressing opinions about the actions of the Union would make anyone feel oppressed. It is not hard to understand why many in Maryland felt that they lived under a "reign of force" destined to wither under a tyrannical president.

A similar article from the *Cambridge Democrat* is "Victory or Death," written in December 1861, in which Georgia's Governor Brown addressed the Confederacy saying that it was better that every person in the South "die nobly" than live under the rule of a despot. He passionately spoke of the consequences of failure; over-taxation, military despotism, standing armies and deprivation of self-respect were but a few of the many horrors the North would inflict upon the South. It would be better to "live freemen, and die freemen" than to live under such conditions. The fact that this article was printed in a Cambridge, MD newspaper indicates that a substantial percentage of the population was interested in or believed what the Confederate government advocated. Like "Land of the Free" this piece of literature illustrates one side of Marylanders living through the Civil War. Those who were unhappy with the way the North was governed and felt that their liberty was at stake were interested in the idea that it was better to die for one's principles than live under subjugation.

Not all Cambridge newspapers were in favor of the Confederacy. Despite the close proximity to the *Cambridge Democrat*, papers like the *Cambridge Herald* were strong supporters of the Union. In an article from October 1865 titled "Will You Become a Democrat," the character of secessionists is questioned and the importance of supporting the Union is emphasized. According to the author, if one votes for a Democrat (who in general supported or sympathized with the principles expressed by the Confederacy) and Democrats are elected to Maryland's Legislature, then that voter is giving "strength and power to the foes of the Union." There is distrust and anger between the Marylanders supporting the Confederacy and Marylanders supporting the Union; each feels that the other is ruining the government and spreading immoral, corrupt behaviors. Through this article it is clear that – though many people felt a tyrant ruled the North – just as many felt that Maryland was a place of freedom that was in jeopardy due to the dishonorable South and disloyal supporters of the Confederacy.

The belief that the Union was in danger from the "treacherous" South can be found in many articles from this time period. In the *Cambridge Weekly Intelligencer*, for example, the article "The Sentiments of a Patriot," written in July 1861, shares the opinion that the South is led by "the rash acts of madmen" and that the Union must be maintained at any cost. According to the author, the South is led by "ambition, avarice and prejudice" and unless the North preserves the Union and shows its Southern brothers the "security under the Stars and Stripes," the nation will "be returned far back to barbarism." This differs greatly from what the *Cambridge Democrat* claimed. Far from believing that by supporting the government a person is supporting a legislature that is filled with tyrants, this paper states that by supporting the Union one supports "for the constitution against anarchy" and is "in favor of principles." With citizens who believed the *Cambridge Democrat* and others who supported the *Cambridge Herald* or the *Cambridge Weekly Intelligencer* living in such close proximity, life during this period must have been chaotic.

Maryland could not escape the mayhem and disunity of the Civil War; strong opinions from supporters of the South and the North spread hate and distrust. For some, the people of Maryland seemed subjugated – oppressed by a government that refused citizens their rights and disregarded the constitution. For others Maryland was a symbol of honor and nobility, ready to fight for a union that brought about "this great and mighty nation." Through the diverse perspectives of the people of Cambridge and the town's newspapers, a glimpse into this struggle can be seen and a period of unrest can be better understood.

Kendra Pain, an English major at Salisbury University, wrote several articles for Nabb during her fall 2012 internship.

When Johnny Reb Came Marching Home: A Dorchester Soldier in the Civil War

By Pilar Burton

Dr. Alexander Hamilton Bayly

In 1860, Maryland was a state divided – politically, economically and socially. Southern Maryland and the Eastern Shore shared much with the South in geographical, social and economic make-up, while Northern Maryland shared more with the North and its industrial life. Politically, much of Maryland was very pro-southern. During the pre-Civil War period, the Eastern Shore and Southern Maryland had exercised considerable political power, providing numerous governors and political leaders.

Lincoln was adamant about keeping Maryland from seceding from the Union. If Maryland had seceded from the Union, the South would have completely surrounded the nation's capital. Lincoln's determination to put down the Southern rebellion and keep Maryland from seceding caused him to liberally interpret the highly controversial power of executive privilege by suppressing many civil liberties.

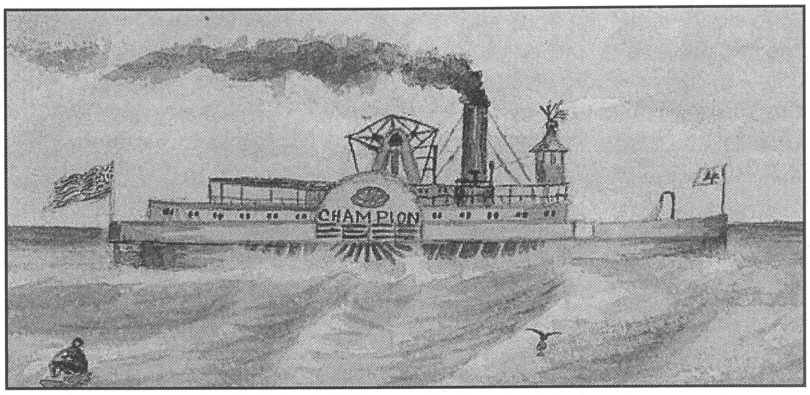
At the same time that Lincoln was applying the full pressure of his executive privilege, many of Maryland's "finest sons" went south to serve in the Confederacy. One of these young men was Alexander Hamilton Bayly Jr., called "Ham" by his family.

The Bayly family had a long and illustrious history on the Eastern Shore, tracing its roots to the 17th-century settlement of Virginia. Ham's paternal grandfather was Josiah Bayly, a member of the Maryland House of Delegates and the Attorney General for the State of Maryland from 1831-46; his maternal grandfather, William Eccleston, was the Register of Wills in Dorchester County. His father, Dr. Alexander Hamilton Bayly Sr., resided in Cambridge and was one of the leading medical men of the Eastern Shore. He was also one of the largest slaveholders in Dorchester County. In the 1860 slave schedule, he is listed as having 27 slaves. A well-read man, Bayly had a keen interest in the admission of Kansas to the Union. The Bayly Family Collection, archived at the Edward H. Nabb Research Center at Salisbury University, includes over 39 different speeches Dr. Bayly collected on this subject.

Although Dr. Bayly did not serve in the war, he had two sons who were of age at that time. "Ham" lived at home with the family in Dorchester County, while his older brother, Washington Josiah Eccleston Bayly, or "Wash" as he was known, resided in Kentucky as early as January 1857. During the Civil War, Dr. Bayly made periodic entries about members of his family in his medical journal. Included in that journal are several entries about Wash visiting the Bayly home in Cambridge, MD, and returning to Kentucky during the war years. A draft notice indicating Wash's eligibility to serve in the Union Army remains in the Bayly correspondence collection, but no documentation has been found to show that he ever served in either the Union or Confederate armies.

In January 1862, Ham left to serve in the Confederacy, but it was not until after General Lee had surrendered in April 1865 that Dr. Bayly actually mentioned Ham's military service in his journal/diary. Perhaps he was fearful that he or his son might be arrested if any written record indicated his son was serving with the Confederate forces. This fear was real since civil liberties rapidly disappeared in Maryland during this time. A surviving letter from the postmaster of Cambridge indicates that he was checking the mail of the Bayly family, suspecting that they were southern sympathizers.

Ham Bayly's own description of his enlistment in January 1862 is as follows: "… a friend approached me in Cambridge and said 'Ham, don't you want to go South?' I replied 'Yes' and he said 'a boat will leave Furnace Wharf at ten o'clock tonight' … the Captain in this case got cold feet and the expedition flunked. I then went to Baltimore and to Point of Rock[s] on the Potomac River, opposite Harper's Ferry … Jackson was on the other side of the Potomac and the crossing was impossible … I returned to Baltimore and gave the Captain of a blockade runner fifty dollars to carry me to Heathsville, Northumberland



The steamer Champion *carried mail between Fortress Monroe and Newport News, VA.*

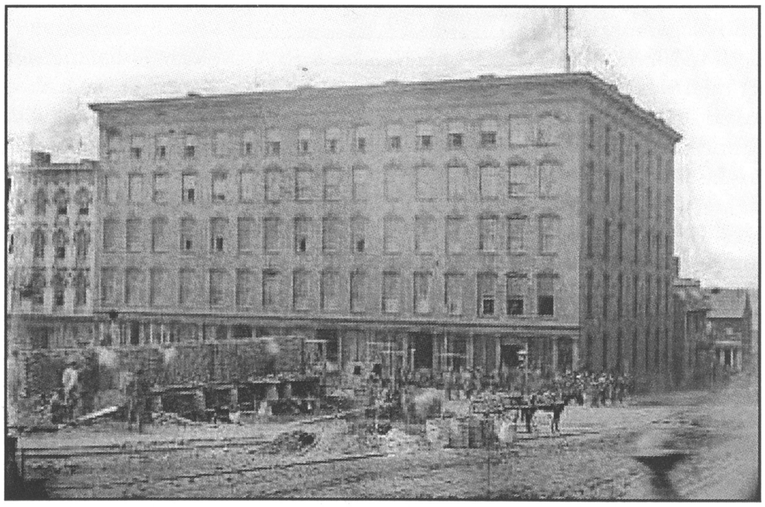
County, Virginia … At Heathsville, I was suspected of being a spy and was sent before General Winder to be examined. I was released and went to Manassas and met the first Maryland Regiment CSA after it had cleaned up the Pennsylvania 'Bucktails' and their old rivals, the First Union Maryland Regiment." (General John Henry Winder, the Provost Marshal of Richmond, was from Somerset County, MD. He was probably acquainted with Ham Bayly's extended family who still resided in Somerset.)

As difficult as it had been to get to "Dixie" in the early years of the war, returning home was just as challenging. Events moved quickly in April 1865. General Robert E. Lee surrendered to General Ulysses S. Grant on April 10, 1865, and President Abraham Lincoln was assassinated four days later. The following weeks were full of confusion as the governmental authorities tried to sort out what was to be done in the various parts of the nation.

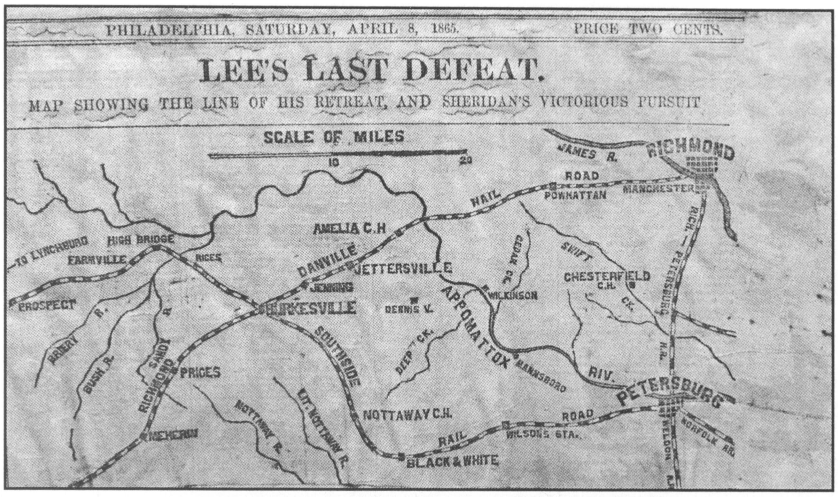
Dr. Bayly notes the following passage in his journal on May 22, 1865: "On Thursday the 23rd of January 1862 Ham left Cambridge to join the South in her struggle for Independence. On April 10th [1865], General Lee surrendered his army to General Grant and on the 26th of the same month General Joseph E Johns[t]on surrendered his army [the Army of Tennessee to Major General William Sherman] in North Carolina after which event the struggle between the North and the South ceased. Thanks be to God!"

He continues with a lengthy description of a letter from his son urgently requesting funds. Dr. Bayly then tells how he set out to find his son and to bring him home to Cambridge, MD. The ledger/diary continues:

> On Friday the 12th of May 1865 I received a letter from Ham dated Danville VA. May 8th urgently requesting me either to come on or send someone with funds. There being no mail arrangements as yet I concluded it best to send a check for one hundred dollars to the Rev Dr. Peterkin [Joshua Peterkin (1814-1892) was rector of St. James Church] of Richmond with the request that he would get it on to Ham by some private conveyance. It was suggested to me by Mrs. Bettie Williams [the wife of Thomas "Tom" H. Williams, the medical director of the Army of the Potomac who was born in Dorchester County and who had studied medicine with Dr. Bayly] who said that he knew Ham and was a very true friend of his and Tom's. On Monday the 14th I enclosed a check to him but during the week my mind became very anxious by the receipt of another letter from Ham, and on Sunday 21st I determined to go myself and started the next day Monday 22nd in the Steamer Champion [piloted by] Capt. Griffith [and] accompanied by Caleb Shepard, Dr. Tom Martin and Mr. George Bryan, a dear gentleman from Alexandria who was driven from his home and has been residing here for the last two years.
>
> After a pleasant voyage I reached Baltimore at 4 o'clock and immediately started for the new line of steamers running to Fortress Monroe and on our way stopped at Mr. Dail's store for a few moments. We succeeded in getting very nice staterooms on board the "George Leary", Mr. Shepard in one Tom Martin and Mr. Bryan in another. Having deposited our hand trunks in our state rooms, we concluded to walk up in the city as the steamer did not leave until 6 o'clock. Mr. Shepard and I walked up to the store of the Misses Cator who gave us letters of introduction. On our way back to the steamer we again stopped at Mr. Dail's store and I left with him my bank books for safe keeping. At 6 o'clock we started from the foot of Frederick Street, the same wharf from which the "Old Maryland" used to leave. We found the steamer crowded with Jews and Yankees going to prey upon what was left of poor old Virginia. After a good supper and pleasant night's rest, we arrived at "Fortress Monroe" about 6 o'clock on Tuesday morning, beating the steamer Adelaide of the old Norfolk line almost 3 hours. After looking all around the Fort and seeing all that was to be seen, admiring especially the Magnolia Granda Flora which was then in bloom we started about 9 o'clock in the Steamer Dictator for Richmond. All the points of interest

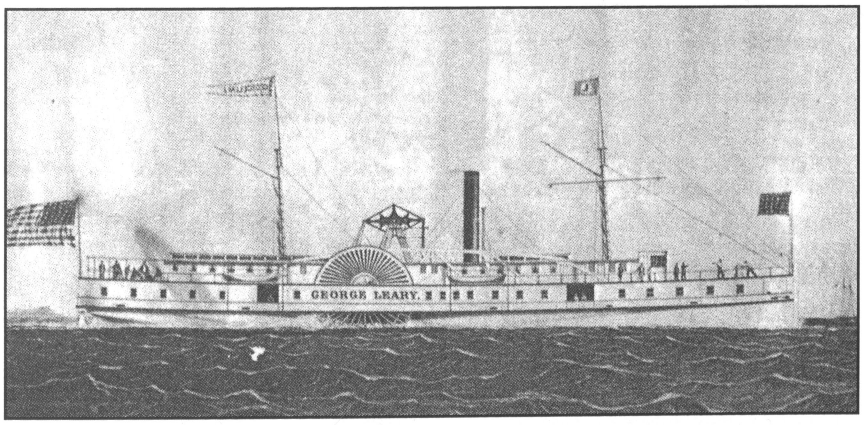


Spotswood Hotel in Richmond, VA.


PHILADELPHIA, SATURDAY, APRIL 8, 1865.
PRICE TWO CENTS.
LEE'S LAST DEFEAT.
MAP SHOWING THE LINE OF HIS RETREAT, AND SHERIDAN'S VICTORIOUS PURSUIT
SCALE OF MILES
10
20
JAMES R.
RICHMOND
ROAD
POWHATTAN
MANCHESTER
RAIL
AMELIA C.H
TO LYNCHBURG
HIGH BRIDGE
FARMVILLE
RICES
DANVILLE
JETTERSVILLE
JENNING
BURKESVILLE
DENNIS V.
CEDAR CK.
SWIFT
CHESTERFIELD C.H.
CK.
RICH. — PETERSBURG R.R.
PROSPECT
BRIERY R.
BUSH R.
SANDY R.
RICHMOND
PRICES
SOUTHSIDE
DEEP CK.
APPOMATTOX
WILKINSON
MANNSBORO
RIV.
PETERSBURG
NOTTAWAY C.H.
ROAD
RAIL
WILSONS STA.
BLACK & WHITE
MEHERRIN
NOTTAWAY R.
LIT. NOTTAWAY R.
WELDON R.R.
NORFOLK RR.

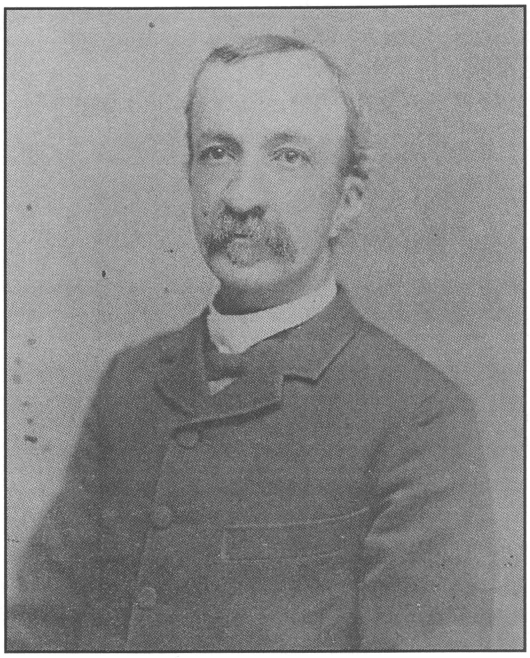
This map from a Philadelphia newspaper was glued into Dr. Bayly's journal. It shows many of the places he traveled along the route to find his son.

on the James River were pointed out to us; Old Jamestown Church, Clay's Bluff, Butler's Dutch Gap can now be seen. We reached Richmond about 6 o'clock that same evening and before we could land we had to register our names and places of residence in books kept by an officer at the gangway of the boat. After we had gotten through with the officer we landed and got in an omnibus for the Spottswood [sic] Hotel. It was truly sad to look at the ruins of Richmond. It seemed like a forest of chimneys and broken walls. It was indeed a most destructive and outrageous fire, the work of thieves and robbers, and had not the Federal Army entered as soon as it did, it was thought that the entire city would have burned. We could not get accommodations at the "'Spottswood" [sic] but went to the "Monumental" a new Hotel immediately opposite the State Capitol, the grounds around which are truly beautiful. After Supper we went round to the Rev Dr. Peterkins with whom I was delighted. He had not been able to get my check on to Ham but had written to him by a friend that he had it for him. After a very pleasant chat of an hour or so, we returned to the Hotel. My check he returned to me. Finding that the cars did not run from Richmond to Danville but they did from Petersburg, I left next morning at 4 o'clock for that city and arrived there about 7 o'clock, but was disappointed in not being able to go in that morning's train as the government was using [it] to transport troops to Danville, so I had to find a Hotel and was recommended to the "Jarrett House" where [I] took lodgings. After breakfast, I started to look at the fortifications around the city, and after a walk of two or three miles reached them, and fortunately falling in with two Federal soldiers who had just been discharged were now visiting the works to take a last look and see how they appeared in peaceful times. They were well acquainted with the works having been stationed amongst them for a long time and seemed to take great pleasure in pointing out all that was interesting. I got back to dinner very much fatigued, after resting two or three hours I started to look at the city, which I found a good deal damaged by the shells and balls. Just before reaching the Hotel, I heard someone hollering: "Doctor, Doctor" and turning around who should I see but "Mexico Jim Woolford" and I was very glad to see him. He went to the Hotel with me and took lodgings for the night, he was just from Richmond and looked very well except in his whiskers shabby so unlike the Jim Woolford of Washington. After supper we had a long talk, poor fellow he is in very reduced circumstances. He was living with a Dr. Scott and was on his way back to his family with a few supplies. His brother Ned had been to see him a week or so before and left him some money. He has a wife and two children. I left next morning about 9 o'clock for Danville and Jim left in a transportation train for Nottaway Court House. From there we had to walk about 20 miles. About 1 o'clock, I arrived at "Burkesville Station" where we changed cars and about 3 left for Danville which we reached about 10 o'clock during the hardest and most severe storm of rain, thunder and lightning I ever saw. We had to remain in the cars until 4 o'clock when we had to get out as the cars would then leave on their return. So in the rain although then not very hard we went up in the city to look for a place of shelter and something to eat. We found at last the "Tunstall Hotel" a very poor apology for such a high sounding title. After breakfast I hired a Negro to show me the way to the Rev Dr. Dames [George W. Dame was the Episcopal minister in Danville]where Ham wrote me he was staying. I found


GEORGE LEARY.

Steamer George Leary

the Doctor, a perfect gentleman and most kind hospitable. He told me that Ham had been staying there but had left a day or so before and was there with a widow lady Mrs. Wilson about a mile and a half in the country. He most kindly proffered to send his servant with a note to Ham, and insisting on making his house my home while I stayed in Danville, which I did. About 12 o'clock high I was indeed made happy in clasping Ham in my arms, and how strangely it felt. He was looking remarkably well and dryed in his Confederate uniform. I told him that he must get ready to leave with me next morning – to take the "amnesty oath" which he did and to bid his friends farewell. After a very good dinner Ham started out and bade all his friends adieu – he was very anxious that I should stay a day longer but the travelling was so uncertain that I was afraid that I might be detained longer than I wished. That evening about 5 o'clock I went down to the "Hotel" and brought up my hand trunk to Dr. Dame's and Ham packed it full of his things. After tea I played the Piano for Miss Ellen Dame and with the family spent quite a pleasant time until we went to bed. We got up at 3 o'clock on Saturday morning the 27th and reached the cars in time leaving 4 o'clock the Rev. Dame accompanying us about 20 miles on to fill an engagement to preach on the next day. I parted with him with reluctance and shall ever cherish in grateful recollection his kind hospitality and his very kind friendly care of Ham. We soon heard it whispered about in the cars that the Bridge across the Stanton River had been rendered impassable to the train on account of the great freshet that was there swelling all the river, for it had been raining very constantly and hard for several days, fortunately our fears were soon dispelled by the train safely passing over, but again our apprehensions were aroused by the report that the Bridge over the little Roanoke river could not be crossed and when we came up to it we found it too small and we all had to get out and walk across and then walk four miles to where we stopped at a large Blacksmith shop in which we were made comfortable by kindling fires. There were a good many disbanded Federal soldiers and many Confederate paroled soldiers returning to their homes. The soldiers soon got to cooking and we had a very comfortable time of it on Hard Tack and coffee. There was a Scotch soldier that took a great fancy to me and supplied me plentifully with coffee etc.


"Ham" Bayly

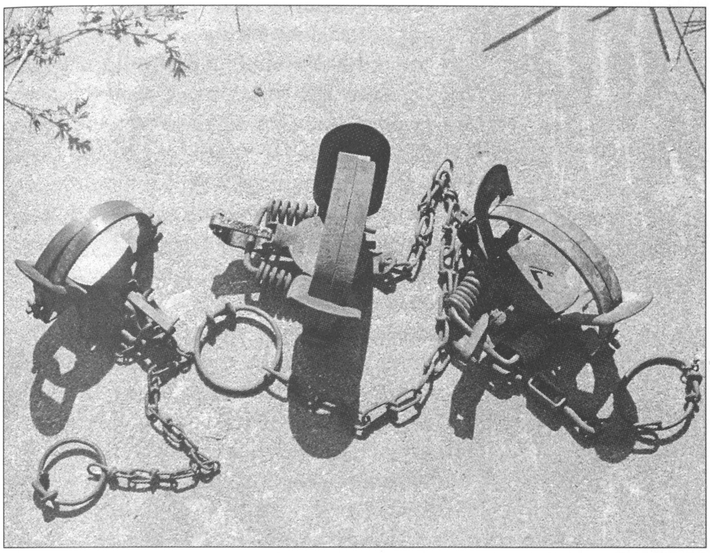
About seven o'clock that evening a transportation train came and we started for "Burkesville Station" which we reached in about an hour or so. We then learned that there had been no train that day but one which would come next day so that night I slept most uncomfortably in the car. The next day Sunday 28th we left about 3 o'clock for Petersburg and City Point and arrived at the later place about 10 o'clock and went to the Hygeia Hotel and was placed in a room with about 50 or 60 lodgers. The next day Monday at 10 o'clock left for Fortress Monroe which we reached about 5 o'clock and at 6 o'clock left in the "George Leary" for Baltimore arriving there at 6 o'clock on Tuesday morning. I went up to Barnum's and got room no. 198 was waited upon by "old Romeo". After Breakfast went to the Barbershop had Ham shaved and haircut, and to "Taylor" across the street for Hat and then to Old Noah Walkers clothing store and soon had Ham nicely dressed. He did not look like the same man as he was very roughly dressed in old Confederate clothes. In going to Mothers I met Mr. Bryan and Rev Mr Barber came in the store whilest we were there. We spent a very pleasant day in Baltimore and on the next day Wednesday the 31st started for home in the steamer Champion and arrived there about half past one o'clock and were warmly greeted by our friends. So Ham is home again looking well and enjoying himself very much and I feel grateful to a kind Providence that for three years and a half protected him.

The contents of the ledger provide in vivid detail the journey of Dr. Alexander Bayly to retrieve his son from Danville, VA, at the end of the divisive war. One can almost visualize each step of the way to obtain his soldier son of whose condition and health he was uncertain. Dr. Bayly's physician's ledger/diary and many other family documents and mementoes are housed in the Nabb Research Center's extensive Bayly Collection and have been the subject of numerous student research projects. This account is just one of hundreds of accounts and stories which may be told by researching collections found in the Nabb archives.

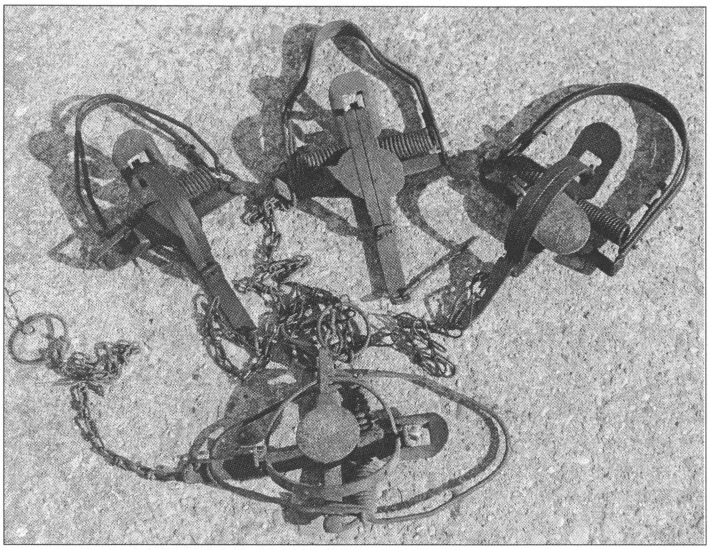
Pilar Burton is completing her master's degree in history this semester while working at the Nabb Center.

W.A. Gibbs and Son and the "Two-Trigger" Trap

By Tom Bradshaw

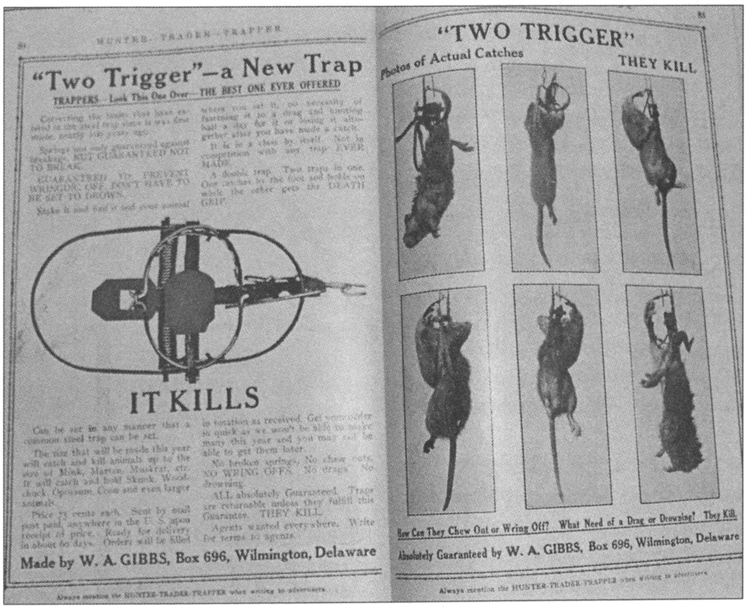


Two-trigger traps Courtesy of Tom Bradshaw.



Long spring and under spring foot traps. Courtesy of Tom Bradshaw.

Dorchester County is well known for the vast marshes, creeks and "guts" that make up the lower portion of the county. Every piece of marsh and waterway has a name known by all of the locals, though the name may never appear on the map. Where I grew up in Golden Hill, there was always talk of the Gibbs Marsh and Gibbs traps. My grandfather, Byron Bradshaw, and his brother Carl trapped marsh that they owned for years using – you guessed it – Gibbs traps across the creek from the Gibbs Marsh. The marsh was finally sold in 1960 because of the declining muskrat population and my grandfather's advanced age. My father said that one winter when he was about 7 or 8 years old, my grandfather and his brother harvested 3,200 pieces of muskrat, raccoon and fox fur from their marsh. It wasn't until recently while doing research on another project that I came across a couple of interesting documents: Dorchester County Chancery case 4340, W.A. Gibbs vs. Jos. W. Bradshaw and others dated 1924, Chancery case 4904, W.A. Gibbs vs. J. Will Bradshaw and others dated 1927. The two cases would show Gibbs' connection to my family and at the same time it would lead me on a trail showing the innovations to trapping that Gibbs made, many of which are still used today.



"Two Trigger"—a New Trap

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THEY KILL

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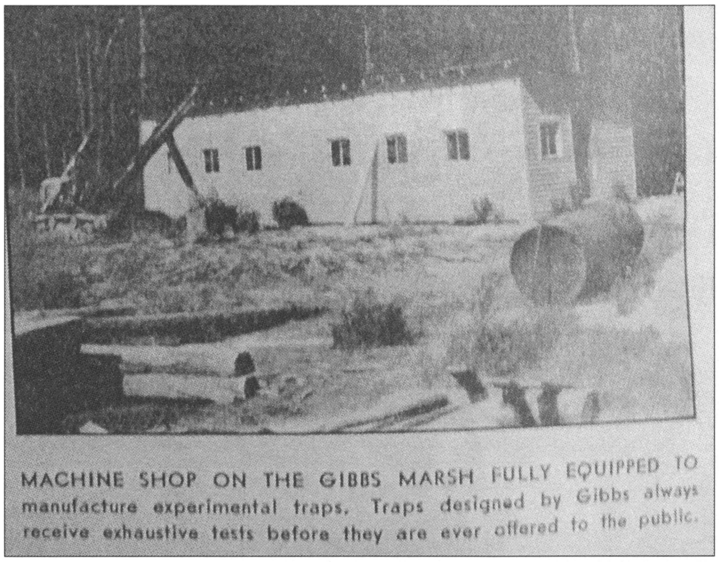
Absolutely Guaranteed by W. A. GIBBS, Box 696, Wilmington, Delaware

Ad from the June 1919 edition of Hunter-Trader-Trapper.

In 1913, Walter A. Gibbs purchased about 600 acres of marsh and timberland in Gum Swamp from local businessman and former state senator William F. Applegarth (Dorchester County Land Records WLR 7.284) on the north side of Meekins Creek. In 1915, Gibbs leased 200 acres of marsh for 10 years from another local businessman, Joseph W. Bradshaw (Dorchester County Land Records WLR 8.668). Joseph W. Bradshaw died in 1921, leaving his children J. Will Bradshaw, John K. Bradshaw, Guy R. Bradshaw and Manie E. Bradshaw overseeing his properties. The lease payment was missed in 1923 and again in 1926, hence the chancery cases.

In case number 4340, Gibbs stated that he discussed with Bradshaw possibly buying the marsh, but instead Bradshaw leased the marsh and was interested in what Gibbs was doing to try and increase revenues from the marshes. In case number 4904, item 13 in the bill of complaint states "That the land described and devised in said lease, is marsh land and what may be termed good 'muskrat' marsh, and because of its location, near to his home and place of business as well as its general suitability, your orator has been using said marsh as a ground for testing out his experiments and theories respecting the methods best adapted for propagation of fur-bearing animals and the capturing of them, as well as a place for the capture of


MACHINE SHOP ON THE GIBBS MARSH FULLY EQUIPPED TO manufacture experimental traps. Traps designed by Gibbs always receive exhaustive tests before they are ever offered to the public.

Picture from the 1930 Gibb Triumph trap catalog.

such animals for sale on the market; that in furthering his experimental ideas on this subject he has gone to considerable expense in the development of said marsh land for such a purpose."

Item 14 states: "That a special skill and judgment is required not only in the actual capturing of muskrats but also knowing how many may be safely taken from the marsh without depleting it, and the marketing of the muskrats requires special skill and judgment in order that they may be sold to the best advantage."

In both cases, Gibbs was allowed to renew the lease for a period of 10 years. The finding of the judge in case 4904 stated that no one from the Bradshaw family was to set foot on the leased marsh or inhibit in any way what Gibbs was doing.

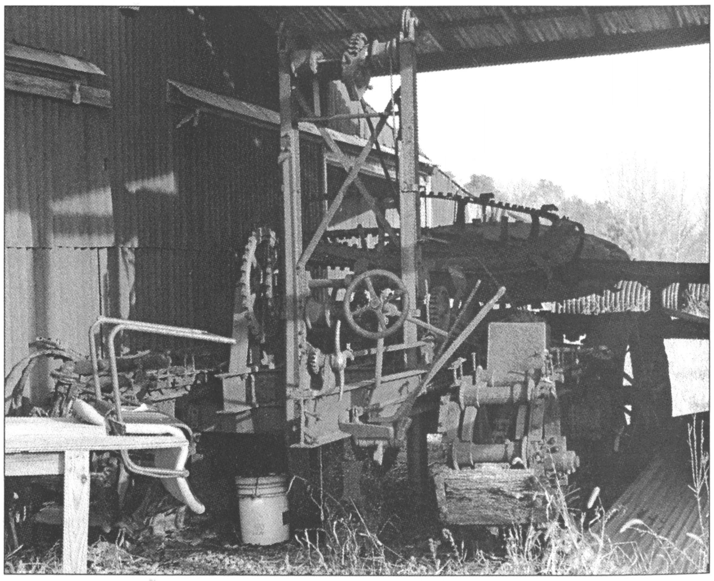
So what exactly was Gibbs doing on his marsh? In a sort of biography in one of his trap catalogs, Gibbs explained that he retired from the railroad for which he was a mechanic, engineer and builder of street railways, and bought the marsh in Gum Swamp as a hunting retreat. According to some of the locals, if the marsh were trapped in the wintertime the money from the pelts would pay the taxes on the marsh, and it would offset the expense of hunting. It seems that Gibbs did indeed try to trap the marsh, but the traps of that time were not very reliable.

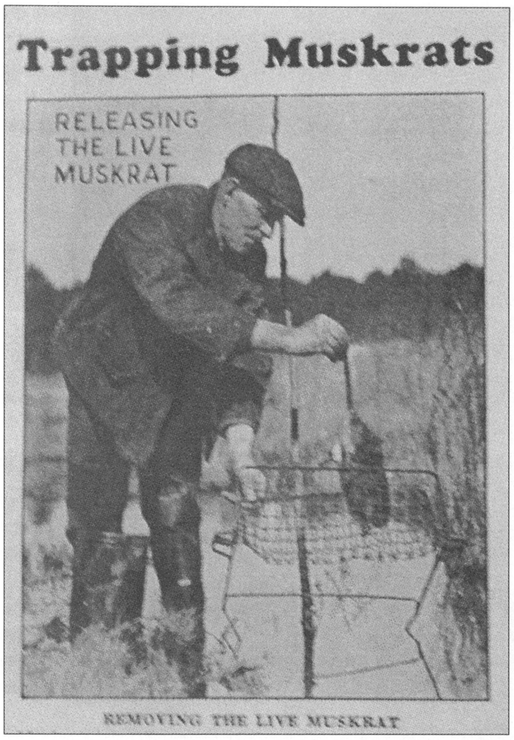
Traps of that time frame were "foot" traps. They were long spring or under-spring. When used a great deal, the long spring had two weak points: the bend in the spring and the ring that went around the jaws of the trap. The under-spring would lose its flex over a period of time, and then there was the fact that the natural instinct of the animal when caught was to either chew its leg off or to wring and twist until either the trap or the animal's leg broke. This meant a loss of food and money for the trapper as well as an injured animal. It was the frustration of the losses and wanting more marsh on which to experiment that led Gibbs to lease the adjacent marsh across the creek from Bradshaw in 1915.

Gibbs built a home or, as it was called in his catalog, a "lodge" and a fully equipped machine shop. It was here that he built his experimental traps that he used on the marsh and kept records of the catch and performance of these traps. Gibbs kept working with designs that finally led to two traps in one. The first – or "inner" trap – was the conventional foot trap with the improvement of its working spring. Remember that traps of the day were mainly long springs – now the new design was a coil spring. The outer trap on this new design was a body grip that also used the coil spring design. Gibbs also gave some of his experimental traps to the local trappers to see what they thought of the new design, but it was a hard sell. Many did not want to try the new design. Gibbs touted in his catalog that the springs, jaws and ears of the new coil spring that he had designed and patented were all easily replaced and a full inventory was always available.

After about five years of experimenting with his designs, Gibbs introduced the new trap. In the June 1919 edition of Hunter Trader Trapper, the W.A. Gibbs "two-trigger" trap was introduced. The trap was advertised as "correcting the faults with the steel trap since it was first made nearly 100 years ago. Springs not only guaranteed against breakage, but guaranteed not to break." The price was 75 cents each, sent by mail, post paid anywhere in the U.S. upon receipt of payment. The advertisement went on to say, "We won't be able to make many this year, and you may not be able to get them later." In this advertisement this request was also made, "Agents wanted everywhere, write for terms to agents." Thus the Gibbs two-trigger trap was born. The pan of the 1919 model trap read "PATENT PENDING." The patent for the two-trigger was issued in 1920 with the company now being called W.A. Gibbs and Son, Chester Pennsylvania. Over the coming years, ads touted the effectiveness of the two-trigger and how it made the trapper money by cutting losses. One local trapper who was familiar with this trap commented that because of its width, it was not good for "hard" marsh; the trapper would have to dig out the run in order to set it, but on a soft marsh it worked great. The two-trigger was eventually offered in two models: the 1920 and the 1924. The difference between the two models was the secondary trap. The 1920 had a flat bar design, while the 1924 model used heavy gauge wire.

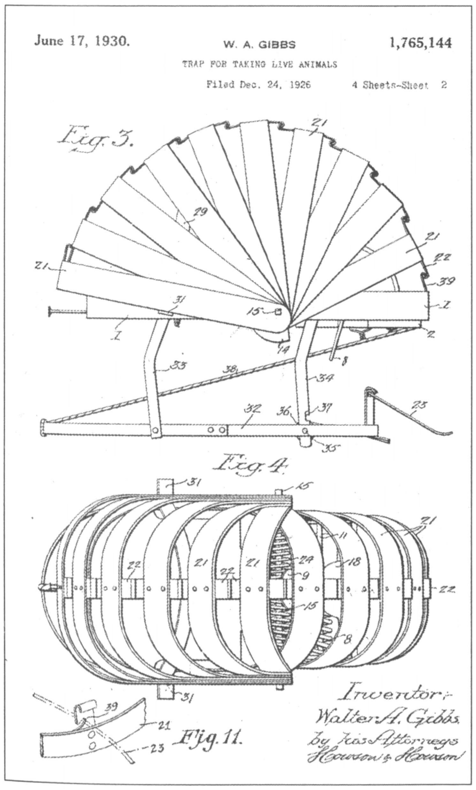
In reading the narratives of the Gibbs catalogs, I discovered that trap design was not the only thing that Gibbs was doing. There were about six miles of canals that Gibbs dug in his


Trenching machine that was used on the Gibbs' marsh to cut trenches to place boards upright in the ground to "corral" the muskrats. This machine is now at the Blackwater Refuge. Courtesy of Tom Bradshaw.



Mesh net live trap as it appeared in a mid-1930s Gibbs Triumph Trap catalog.

marsh to allow easier access for trapping. There was also the use of a type of trenching machine to cut into the marsh to allow boards to be placed in the ground upright with as much of the board exposed above ground as was buried in the marsh. This was done to "corral" the muskrats. In addition to designing and testing traps, Gibbs also trapped and sold the "live" muskrats all across the globe. For this part of his operation Gibbs employed a number of local trappers. In the live operation there were two types of traps developed. (Due to the constant threat of hawks and owls, Gibbs also designed and patented a hawk trap. The hawk trap was nailed to the top of a pole; when the hawk or owl "perched' on the pole it was caught and dispatched.) The armadillo trap – so named for the appearance of its steel shell when "tripped" – and the wire mesh net live trap. The armadillo trap was a foot trap that, when activated, would release a covering holding the muskrat in, releasing the foot hold and raising itself out of the water so the animal would not drown. The net trap worked in much the same manner, folding the net over the muskrat and then raising itself and a flag out of the water so that the men tending the marsh for Gibbs could see it and go gather the live muskrat. The live operation was round-the-clock with men staying in the lodge watching for the flag to raise so they could gather the animal before it damaged itself. It is said that carbide lights were rigged into traps so that the flags could be seen at night. The "rats" were taken from the live trap and put into covered gallon cans that were ventilated and then released into pens. From there they were put into crates and shipped.



Patent drawing of armadillo trap invented by Gibbs.

In the early 1930's W.A. Gibbs and Son sued the Triumph Trap Company over a patent infringement on their three-jaw trap. This was the death knell for the Triumph Trap Company. Gibbs bought Triumph out and the new catalogs were Gibbs Triumph. The W.A. Gibbs Triumph Trap Company offered the traditional long spring and under-spring foot traps as well as the coil spring traps that Gibbs designed and patented. Gibbs went on to patent many other types of traps such as sparrow traps and rat and mousetraps. The catalog also offered a "humane capsule" that could be attached to the jaws of the trap. It was a cyanide capsule that would quickly dispatch the animal when bitten into, as that was the natural instinct of the animal when caught. W.A. Gibbs and Son also expanded their manufacturing operations to Toronto, Canada and received many Canadian patents as well. William Gibbs followed his father's footsteps by leasing marsh on the Transquaking River. The Gibbs Company sold out to the Animal Trap Company that had its roots in the Oneida Community of New York around 1936, and by some accounts the Animal Trap Co. used the Transquaking marsh to test their new designs. It is not known, however, if William Gibbs was involved with the Animal Trap Company. Gibbs sold the marsh in Gum Swamp to his son in 1940. The December 6, 1937 edition of Newsweek magazine had an article about Gibbs and his muskrat operations on the marsh here in Dorchester and the 3,000 acres of marsh he acquired in the Currituck Sound area of North Carolina. The black muskrats that today inhabit the marsh in North Carolina were trapped by Gibbs and his employees here in Dorchester and transferred to the marsh in North Carolina to breed.

Though foot traps are still used today, they are not the trap of choice for those who trap muskrats. The trap used today is a body grip known by its inventor's name: the Conibear, invented by a French Canadian trapper named Frank Conibear in the 1930s. It comes in 110 (muskrat), 220 and 330 (otter and beaver) sizes. For trappers in Dorchester, it became popular during the 1950s and '60s. Foot traps are still used for trapping fox and raccoon. The long and under springs are still made and used today, as are the coil spring design that was invented and patented by Gibbs here on the marshes of Dorchester County.

Tom Bradshaw is still researching W.A. Gibbs, his trap company and his Dorchester County business. He is looking for photographs and anyone who may have worked for him or his son William R. Gibbs. Please contact Bradshaw at rgcs5106@comcast.net. if you have additional information about this topic

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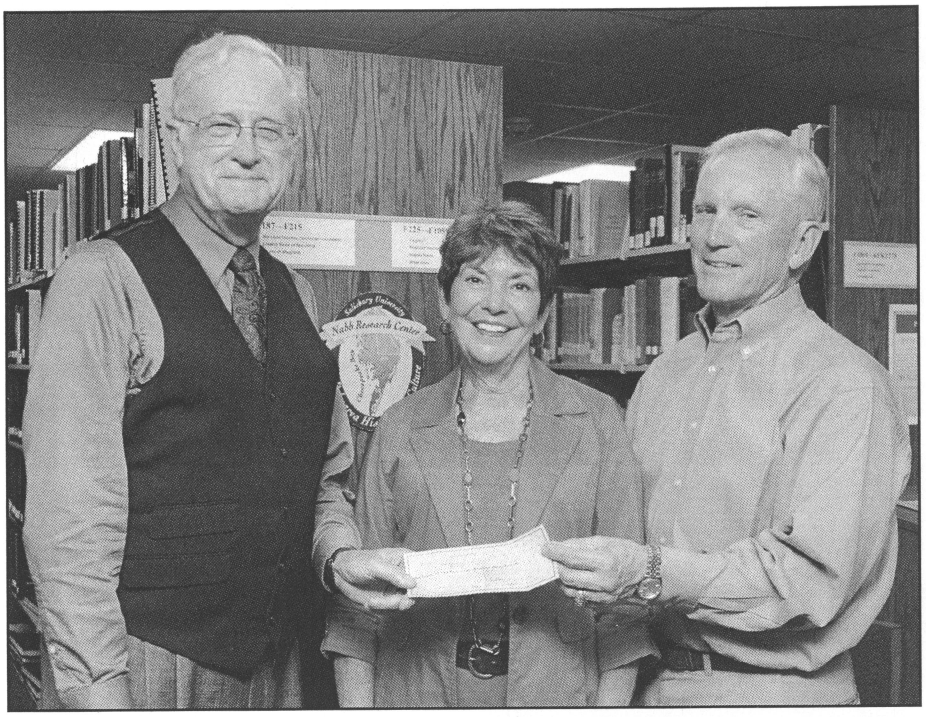
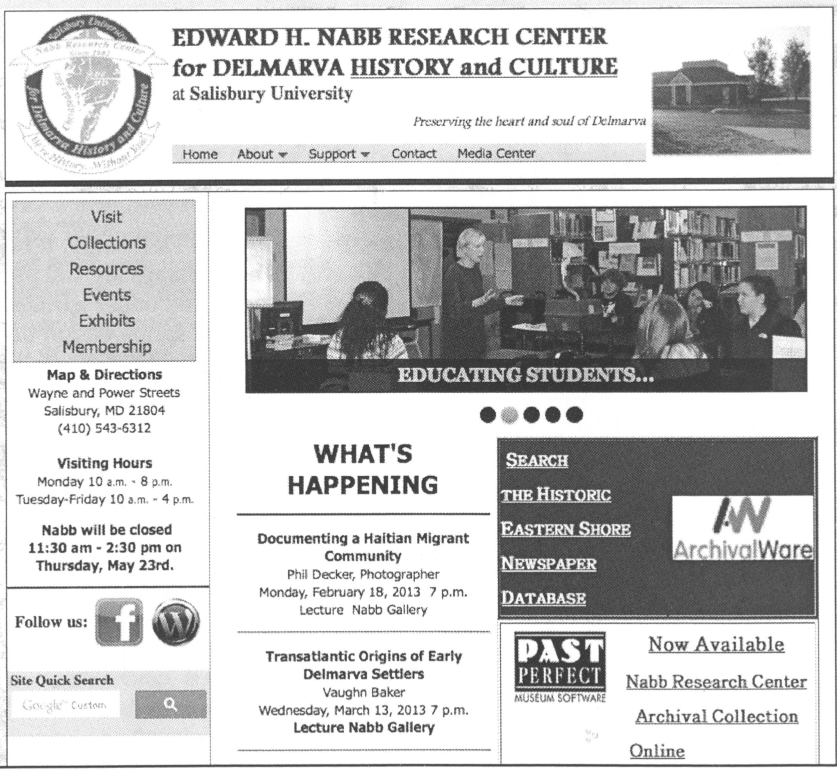

Michael and Joanna Abercrombie presenting a $25,000 check to Dr. Ray Thompson, Director of the Nabb Center. The gift was to honor Joanna Cato, Mrs. Abercrombie's mother, who set a great example for her family with a love of history and commitment to the community throughout her 91 years.

Find information and listings of upcoming events by visiting our Web site at **http://nabbhistory.salisbury.edu**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Nabb will be closed 11:30 am - 2:30 pm on Thursday, May 23rd.

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Documenting a Haitian Migrant Community
Phil Decker, Photographer
Monday, February 18, 2013 7 p.m.
Lecture Nabb Gallery

Transatlantic Origins of Early Delmarva Settlers
Vaughn Baker
Wednesday, March 13, 2013 7 p.m.
Lecture Nabb Gallery

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